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WESTERN AMERICANA

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Cow-Boy Life in Texas,

....OR....

27 Years a Mavrick.

A Realistic and True Recital of Wild Life on the
Boundless Plains of Texas, being the Actual Experience of Twenty-Seven years in the Exciting
Life of a Genuine Cow-Boy Among the
Roughs and Toughs of Texas.

OVER FIFTY ILLUSTRATIONS, TAKEN FROM LIFE.

By W. S. JAMES.

M. A. DONOHUE & CO.
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By W. S. JAMES,
[illegible]

A SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR'S LIFE

On the 27th day of August, 1856, in Tarrant County, Texas, I drew my first breath, and from the best information I can gather, my mother—bless her dear soul!—shed many a bitter tear over her first born, because it was said that I was the ugliest little bundle of humanity that could have been found in seventeen States and fourteen Territories; and to add to the discomfort of my child mother (for she was only a little past sixteen when I was born) they who know, tell me that I kept up a continual squall for three months of my first experience on a cattle ranch, and from the shape of my head and my incessant bawling it was vaguely hinted by some of the wiseacres that I was a little idiot. So between my homeliness and uncertain mental caliber no wonder that mother, in her new experience, should become disheartened; but, thanks to a propitious climate and the refining influences of a leather strap judiciously applied, I eventually developed into quite a presentable youngster, when asleep. When I was one year old my father moved his cattle to a western county. This was in the fall of '57, only a short time before the last great outbreak of hostilities on the part of the Indians that waged with such unceasing warfare on the frontiers of Texas for so many years.

It being a wild, desolate region, and my father's business necessitating his absence from home for a good portion of the time, it was thought advisable to make a sort of stockade round the little ranch house and provide mother and me with arms and ammunition with which to defend ourselves. So they cut oak logs eighteen feet long, as I remember from what I have heard—and in those days I was not so particular about a foot or two, one way or the other, when it came to logs, as I did not have to cut or split them—they split the logs in half, dug a ditch around the house four feet deep, planted the first set with the flat side out, then broke the joints with the next set, making very good protection against attack. They were pinned together, and a good strong gate made. The spring from which we got water was perhaps 150 yards away, and when mother would go for water she would take me outside the house, fasten the door to keep me from falling in the fire or burning the house down during her absence. She would take the double-barrel shot-gun and four or five of the dogs, leaving part of them to protect me. It was necessary that we keep a good pack of hounds on hands on account of the numerous varmints that were then in the country. Maybe you think this was not trying on a woman, but such was the life of many of the wives of the ranchmen in those early days.

I grew and, as the saying goes, did well. I just can remember my first education. Mother says herself that she thought I never would learn my letters unless she could manage to get the alphabet put on the cattle one letter on each cow, as it was not hard for me to learn the brands. I got many a thump because of my seeming indolence. Strange to say, what mother had tried for two years to teach me my first teacher accomplished in one afternoon. I suppose one reason for it was my natural cowardice. I was simply afraid not to. It is true mother would pound me around once in a while, but you understand that we were so near the same age I soon got used to her and did not so much mind her thumping. In fact she was the only playmate I had to be called one until I started to school.

I shall never forget my school-days for many reasons, some of which are common to all boys. Mother had no girls, and I, being the oldest, was brought into requisition as the maid-of-all-work. The war came on. Mother had to spin and weave cloth to keep the growing little family of tow-heads, father and herself in something to wear. True, father had plenty of such as it was, but it was in the shape of cattle and money, and neither would make good clothes and there was no cloth to be bought. Mother would spin and weave, father would help her nights and make our shoes and it fell to me to get wood, milk the cows and wash the dishes. The latter I never did like and it was more especially repulsive when I was going to school, for it knocked me out of my play time at noon.

I do not suppose there is a boy on earth who likes to miss his play at school; if there is, his parents should get a double back action spanking machine and give him lessons every day until they infuse into him a little life, if he is a stout, hearty boy. Sometimes it was very trying on me. I remember at one time while washing the dishes from the morning meal I accidentally broke a saucer, and they were very scarce; but when mother knew that anything was accidental she was very indulgent. At the noonday meal we had company, and I will explain to any northern or eastern people who may read this that the noonday meal with us was dinner; we have breakfast in the morning, dinner at noon and supper in the evening.

On this particular day I wished very much to return to my school play-ground. Mother asked me very kindly to go and wash the dishes. Taking advantage of the presence of company, I said to her: "If you make me wash the dishes I will break another saucer." She very politely informed me that I should wash the dishes and if I broke a saucer or anything else I should have the soothing application of a leather strap. I knew from sad experience what that meant, so I went to work, and it is needless to say that I was careful but as the Fates would have it, I broke the saucer. But.

Oh, the memory of her counsel with a leather strap appplied,
While for mercy and for pardon I, her eldest hopeful, cried.
And while mother played the fiddle, it is true, though strange to tell,
It was I who made the music, yes I made the chorus swell,

And but for the words consoling which she spake so tenderly,
While applying that cold leather (though 'twas hard for me to see)

I'm sure I'd ne'er survive', for it seemed the stars would fall,
And my mother said: "I'll whip you just so long as you shall squall."

But the gentle words I've mentioned: "Try and bear it now my son,
You'll feel good when it quits hurting for I've only just begun."
Then says she: "You'll break a saucer, Willie dear, I think you said."
And she taught me, for she had to, how the narrow path to tread.

She dressed me down and left me sadder but a wiser boy,
Yet to-day I thank my mother that she used that leather toy.
Yes, I love my mother better than if she had let me stray,
For I needed just such training, I was simply built that way.

And along the rugged pathway 'tis with pleasure I recall
Admonitions backed with leather, tho' it used to make me bawl.
For I couldn't do without it and I got it like a top
When my stubborn will encountered, mother and that leather strap.

As all the events of any interest that I could record are of a nature that I do not wish to recall; besides, they have been so often flaunted to the world by more courageous writers than I, being only the bloody times of a reign of terror, rowdyism and whiskey carnage from the years of '69 to '76, I will simply say that in looking back in review of my life during those years, I can hardly see how I passed through such a time, with the scenes so common of the nature above referred to, without becoming so demoralized as to render redemption impossible.

It would look to a disinterested character that the thieves, cut-throats, thugs and hard characters of every State in the Union had swooped down upon Texas like so many vultures upon a carcass, and it was a struggle that has left its deadening effects upon the State and gave it a name abroad that it will take many years to outgrow.

Texas got such a reputation for rowdyism and crime, that when she did arouse to the fact that she had received such a blot upon her fair name, the reaction was something wonderful, and for a peace-loving and law-abiding citizenship I do not believe she can be surpassed on the face of the globe to-day.

At the age of nineteen I went to Lampasas, Texas, was married when twenty-one, and to the one I secured as the companion of my life journey I largely owe my redemption from the life of sin and recklessness that I had adopted. Her help, coupled with the Godly counsel of Christian parents, and the fact that I still cherished their memory and advice as sacred, eventually wrought a change in my life.

When God had given us some little treasures in our home, the childish prattle and confiding trustfulness of the little ones aroused within me all the manhood that I had left. The first step that I took in the right direction was on the first day of January, 1884. I came home just about as drunk as a man can well be not to stagger (I speak it with shame); I dare say when I got warm I would have done so if I had not gone to bed. I was very cold when I came in, and after greeting my little family, I sat by the fire warming.

My precious little girl climbed upon my knee, and putting her tender, little hands on my face, one on either side, and kissing me, she said: "Papa, what's matter with your eyes?" Reader, I never had anything sink deeper into my heart. Shame, mortification, regret—conviction of worthlessness—combined to make me miserable and wretched. I felt, in the presence of innocence, the criminal that I was.

I said to her: "My darling, papa is about half shot in the eye." She climbed down, went into the next room, where her mother was, and asked: "Mamma, do you know what's matter with papa's eyes?" Her mother answered: "No; what is it?" "He is about half shot in the eye," said baby innocence. Right then and there, friends, I made a solemn vow to God that I would never touch another drop of liquor, or anything that had alcohol in it, if I knew it. And, as God is my judge, I never have. That was nine years ago the first day of January, 1893, and with His help I never will. I have this request to make of my friends: if they should ever see me unconscious not under any circumstances to allow the accursed stuff given me, for I never want the smell of alcohol on my breath again while I live.

I am its inveterate foe and shall live and die fighting the demon that has blighted the lives of so many of my school-mates and companions and that came so near ruining my own life, that took my better judgment, sunk me almost to the level of the brute and came near to blighting the lives of those whom I had sworn before God to support and protect.

On the 12th day of April, 1885, I was converted to Christianity, and though I have made many mistakes, lived far short of my privilege as a Christian, still it is largely due to the mistakes of my early life. God pardoned my sins and has upheld me with His loving counsel, yet I was compelled to reap my wild oat crop, the sowing of years gone by. The Lord can and will save the criminal in the felon's cell if he will only trust Him, but He will not gather his wild oats for him, for "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

He saved me, but He did not go back and straighten up all the mistakes I had made, neither does he promise to do so, but He made it possible for me to do it and I will live to see every debt settled, every wrong righted and yet be able to look the world square in the face and practice what I preach without the fear of some one pointing at me and saying, "Physician, heal thyself." My faith reaches just that far.

After I was a Christian I went out among the cattlemen and worked as a missionary, not as a minister, for I never felt that my calling, but as a layman in the church, until my health gave way and I was compelled to give up active work. I am regaining my health, and when once free from the bondage of debt I expect to devote the remainder of my life to the task of trying to make this old world better by having lived in it. Many things I have left out of this little sketch of my life because I am ashamed of them, many others I leave untold because it would be of no service to any one. One little circumstance in my life will serve to illustrate the folly of exaggerated stories often told by people of themselves or written by the unscrupulous in regard to ranch life and read by the small boy.

While in Mt. Eagle, Tennessee, in the year 1890, I met a little boy about ten or eleven years of age; before I formed his acquaintance, some one had pointed me out to him as a Texan. One day his mother approached me and said her little boy wished to know me. We met at the dinner table. He had a great many questions to ask about Texas, and by his perseverance attracted the attention of very near every one who was at the table with us. At last he asked me if I had ever been on a ranch. I answered that I had. "Oh," said he, "Did you ever kill an Indian?" I studied for a moment, at a loss just how to answer the question. I was anxious to eliminate as much of the poison from his young mind as possible. Finally I said, "Maybe I killed one." All excitement, he exclaimed, "Tell me about it quick." "Well," said I, "there were some Indians got after me once, and ran me so hard that I am not certain but that one of them from overheat took sick and died of a bad cold, I would not be sure of it, however some of the boys said they were satisfied he did."

The little fellow was completely whipped out. He knuckeled right down to his dinner and did not ask another question during the meal. However, we became fast friends afterward, and when I left Mt. Eagle I think I left with him quite a different impression and nearer the correct one, in regard to life on a ranch, than he had gotten from the blood and thunder stories published by unscrupulous adventurers.

I will say in conclusion, that the natural undeveloped resources of my native State are simply immense. They are beyond my power to tell, knowing the country even as well as I do, having spent my life in its borders. I have traveled it over time after time from Texarkana to El Paso, from Denison to the Rio Grande, cross, recross, up and down, all 'round and for safe investment, for sure returns, I know no country of such advantages for the honest laboring man who wishes to live by his honest toil, there is no State in the Union where a small investment will secure such a home as one can and may have in Texas.

What the State needs to-day is men who can pay for, improve and cultivate as they should be cultivated, small farms of ten, twenty and forty acres of land. For truck farming it cannot be beaten the world over. Speculators have done for Texas what they have done for many other States, but she is now going through a good healthy sweat and by '95 will begin to move again, and I bespeak for her a prosperity such as has never been enjoyed by the dear old home land before.

Some people say that they do not want to go to Texas because of the insecurity of life and property. I speak without the fear of successful contradiction when I say that life and property are as secure in Texas as in any State in the Union. I do believe that if I wished to take chances in crime I would rather risk my neck in any other State than in Texas. The reason is simple enough. The people have gotten tired of the name they had to wear, and the reaction has been universal.

This is not an advertisement. I have simply related what I know to be true in regard to the land of my birth, and if you go there once, partake of the hospitality of her people, breathe her pure, invigorating air, feast on her beautiful scenery, delight yourself with the fragrance of the gardens of wild flowers in the spring time, bask in the sunshine of her cloudless skies, hear the sweet songs of her birds, you will back me up in my statements. But go slow, now. In justice I must give you the other side of the picture. Sometimes, when dry weather strikes her in summer, it is very gloomy. Again, when a Texas norther comes rolling down from the icy regions it is not so lovely.

But the beauty of that is the cold snap seldom lasts longer than three or four days at a time, and if every third year was drouthy—which is not so—we would make enough the two good years to keep us over in fine shape until the next one.

Now to return for a word more on my own life. We are taught in God's Word that we should train up a child in the way he should go. From the dawn of my earliest recollection my father was a cattleman, and 'mid the trials and temptations common to life on a ranch, I cannot remember when my father and mother did not gather their little ones round the fireside before retiring for the night, read from the Bible, sing a hymn and offer prayer.

Certainly, to a very large extent I owe my respect and love for Christianity to my early training, and every day thank God for the memory of Christian parents. I mention this that it may encourage some one to try my father's course. There is a chance for everyone to mend his ways, and now is the time.

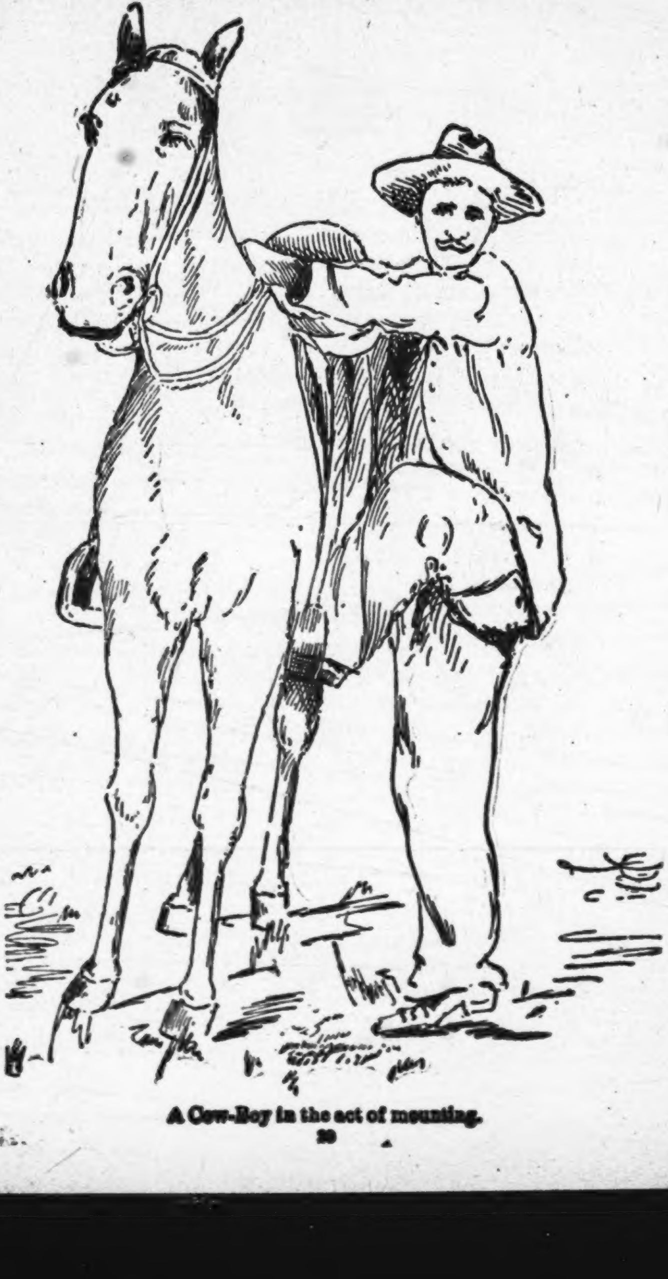
The longer one sows the larger the crop will be when the reaping time shall come. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." A merciful father has given us this life in which to prepare for the next. Let us waste not the time in sowing wild oats.

Be careful what you sow my boy,
For seed that's sown will grow;
And what you scatter day by day,
Will bring you joy or woe.
For sowing and growing,
Then reaping and mowing,
Are the surest things e're known;
And sighing and crying,
And sorrow undying
Will never change seed that is sown.

Be watchful of your words my boy,
Be careful of your acts;
For words can cut, and deeds bring blood,
And wounds are stubborn facts.

Whether sleeping or weeping,
Or weary watch keeping,
The seed that is sown will grow.
The rose brings new roses,
The thorn tree discloses
Its thorns as an index of woe.

Be careful of your friends my boy,
Nor walk and mate with vice;
"The boy is father to the man,"
Then fly when sins entice.
The seed one is sowing,
Through time will be growing,
And each one must gather his own.
In joy or in sorrow,
To-day or to-morrow,
You reap what your right hand has sown.



A Cow-Boy in the act of mounting.

CHAPTER I.

THE TERM COW-BOY.

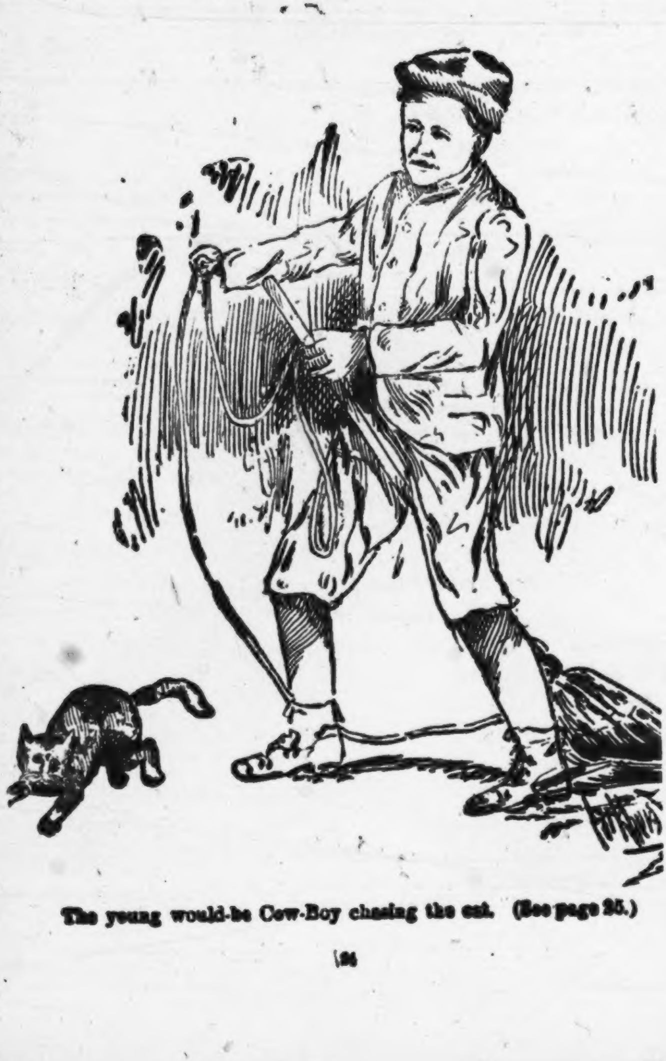
The term cow-boy has been so universally abused in its application to so many different classes and under such varied circumstances, that if it were not for the fact that every genuine article of any merit is sure to have a counterfeit, the genuine cow-boy would be ashamed to acknowledge his identity. As an illustration of the assertion that counterfeits are an evidence of the existence of the genuine, take the treasury note, the silver and gold dollars, which are counterfeited because of their intrinsic value. They procure for us the necessaries of life.

The Christian religion is another article that has this evidence of its genuineness. Even the cold, philosophical moralist, the scientific, reasoning skeptic will tell you "I pay my honest debts, I give to the poor, the orphans and widows, I don't lie or steal, I do unto others as I would have others do unto me." Thus very minutely, though perhaps unintentionally, carrying out the line of argument given us in the Bible. In the language of the ancient pharisee: "God I thank thee that I am not as other men are." This is simply counterfeiting or trying to counterfeit the true principles of morality which come alone in their fullness, as a result of a living, walking, talking faith in the despised Nazarine.

For, "Pure religion undefiled before God, and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows, in their affliction, and keep himself unspotted from the world." In the two illustrations here used to show that the presence of a counterfeit is evidence of the existence of the genuine, I have shown that there are motives of a selfish nature to prompt the act of counterfeiting, and if men will allow themselves to be led to the commission of such deeds in relation to these in view of the attending penalties, the article that offers no hope of reward as an inducement for duplicating itself, that is so widely looked upon with envious longing, so universally sought after as something to make one feel "big," as is the appellation "cow-boy," must in its original possess a peculiar merit.

It is true there has been so much written and said about the cow-boy and ranch life of the blood and thunder, wild and woolly character, that the very novelty and excitement of the sensational stories so prevalent, would as a consequence attract the impulsive, hot-blooded American youth, and lead him to desire the reputation of a cow-boy. Just as reading the lives of such characters as the Younger Brothers and James Boys, and ten-cent detective trash, so often sends the small boy on the war-path with blood in his eye.

The cow-boy is confined to certain localities, consequently is subject to impositions that seldom fall to the lot of other characters. This is largely due to the sensational stories before referred to, written by people, as a rule, who know no more about life on a ranch than a hog knows about the solar system. The natural tendency of the human family seems to be to make



The young would-be Cow-Boy chasing the cat. (See page 25.)

a story tell well, and the commonly accepted theory is that it needs to be renovated and colored, in order to stand the universal test. In other words, "the unvarnished truth" is too tame for this day, and age of nineteenth century progress.

When men write on the subject who are familiar with the facts, from some unaccountable cause, they become possessed of an ambition for notoriety, and are willing to belittle the craft by exaggerating almost everything of which they write. The public read these stories, and from a morbid tendency on the part of a great majority of mankind to lionize a daring spirit, though it be of the demoniacal kind, they form their opinions, which are too often very absurd. The boy at his mother's knee catches the inspiration that starts him out in a life of counterfeiting the cow-boy.

One of the greatest mistakes that parents can make is to point to a man of bad character, either of their personal acquaintance or in history, and say of his daring: "I admire that man because what he does he does boldly and above board." The parent that thus places a premium on the misdeeds of the bold man issimply paving the way for a life of regret on account of the waywardness of his reckless boy.

The first evidence of a "cow-boy" counterfeiter, so often seen, is the small boy, as he leaps astride the broom handle with an imaginary quirt and spur, with a leather band 'round his little cap, a twine string for a rope; he goes whooping across the room, chasing the cat, a stick in the waistband of his pants for a pistol or knife, thus putting into practice the lesson he has learned by close observation, which will develop him by-and-bye into the "wild and woolly" would-be-horned cow-boy. The ignorance on the part of the majority of mankind of the true character of the "genuine cow-boy" makes it less difficult to palm off the counterfeit on the average man, than for the genuine article to defend itself against the encroachments of the humbug.

In evidence of what I say, let a crowd of half-drunken men board a train in any town in Texas, begin to whoop and yell like a troop of Comanche Indians on the war-path, and every one who is not posted—among the passengers—will talk about the "cow-boys," when perhaps not one in the outfit ever saw the interior of a Texas cow camp; and yet, every such character will gladly pose as a "cow-boy." They think it looks "big."

Let some fiend incarnate tank up with "sixteen shooting liquor," take a pistol and shoot into a passenger train, and it is the "cow-boys." A band of robbers throws an obstruction upon the track, flags the train, robs the passengers, kills the expressman, and it is a "band of cow-boys." A lone highwayman holds up the Angelo & Balinger mail coach, a cow-boy is sent to the penitentiary for the deed, and it is afterward proven that he knew nothing of it until he was arrested.

The Comanche Chief, a paper published in Comanche, Texas, some years ago said: "He that tooteth not his own horn, the same shall not be tooted." But the men who seem to take a delight in tooting the horn for the cow-boy are blowing it from the wrong end. They don't really wish to do him an injustice, but the spirit of extravagance in relating things about him, coupled with ignorance, leads them into error, and injures the subject; however, true merit will outlast misrepresentation, and one can outgrow it by an honest and faithful adherence to truth, and close application to business. True nobility of character will show itself; no difference what the surroundings may be. True metal will ring. I unreservedly make the assertion that there is no station or calling in life that will test true manhood quicker than the life of a ranchman.

And my advice to the Jim Crow counterfeiter, who, in order to gain a reputation as a "bad man from Bitter Creek" by posing as a cow-boy with a dollar and a half leather band on a sixty-five-cent hat, and a bottle of red pepper and branch water red eye in his jeans, is for him to stick just as close to the piney woods of east Texas and Arkansaw as possible, and never show himself to any one except a downeaster, who has never traveled through the West. If he will take this little piece of gratuitous advice, he can bask in the sunshine of his own bloated imagination, and eat his own "little taters" in sandy land; but if he ever ventures to show his contemptible cranium within fifty miles of a decent cow camp, he will have his humbug qualifications of cow-boy stripped from his poor worthless carcass so quickly that he would feel like a jay bird with his tail feathers gone. Three rounds of the righteously indignant sarcasm of the ranch cook would make him wish that he had never seen the outside of his little truck patch.

A great number of this character make themselves so ridiculous that if they take work on a ranch they soon "play out" and are relegated to the rear. They imagine when they begin work that the first thing to do is to show how much liquor they can drink, and it is there they make a mistake. Some of them have sufficient sense to cut their eye-teeth and profit by their experience.

One of the most disgusting features of counterfeiting the "cow-boy" is that class of young preachers who covet the appellation. What one is to understand by the term cow-boy preacher I have never yet learned. If it means a man who has been a cow-boy, and, having quit the cattle business, has gone into the ministry, then the term, in many instances, has been very decidedly misapplied.

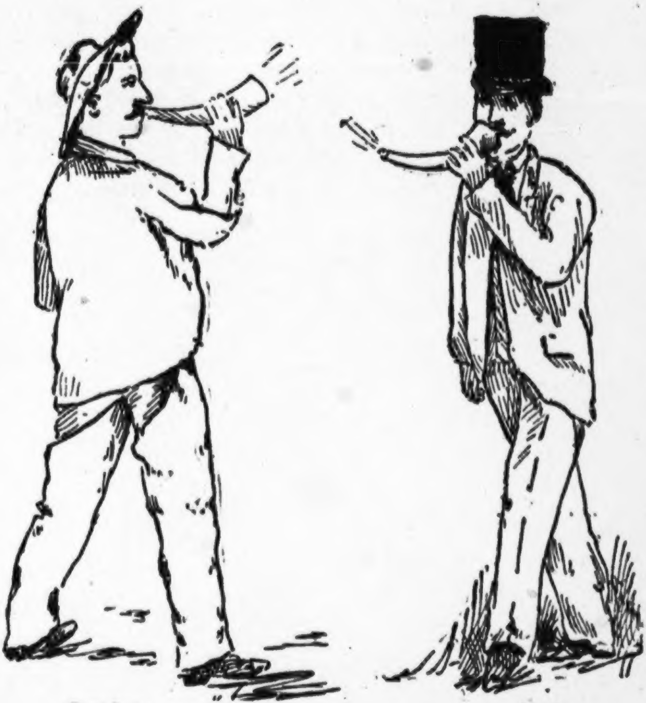
It is certainly quite amusing to see a little six-bit fellow start out to slinging slang from the pulpit, posing as the cow-boy preacher. He usually procures a ten-ounce hat with a leather band, a pair of high-heeled boots, and then he is sailing. I met one such, and in conversation with him found, to my astonishment and disgust, that he had never been on a regular cow ranch in his life. His experience consisted, I am convinced, in sitting on the fence and seeing the herd go by, or watching his mother milk an east Texas dogy cow. He didn't know the first letter in the cow-man's alphabet.

It would be a regular Fourth of July for the boys to have him in camp for twenty-four hours. He would leave them a sadder but perhaps a wiser man; and about the only pleasant sensation he would experience when gone would be that of loneliness. Some people, it seems, can never learn that it is capital well invested to be just what God made them. It is one of the mistakes of a man's life to try to appear other than natural. The Scotch bard has most truthfully said, "The honest man, though ever so poor, is the king of men for a' that." To assume an unnatural character just for effect, or to appear to be familiar with subjects and things of which one is wholly or partially ignorant, is to place one's self in a false attitude that will sooner or later bring him to grief.

We once had a character in our range who clearly wished to appear as a great and wealthy man, one who had seen the elephant and heard the owl. He was a peculiar specimen, one of those who, on the outside of about three-fingers in a wash-tub of red liquor, was a "bunch of roses"—who. in his own language, was born "high up on the Gaudaloupe, raised on thorny prickly pear, quarreled with alligators and fought grizzly bear," sort of a fellow.

Some of the less credulous of the boys at one time took it into their heads to take an inventory of his possessions and travels, as he should relate it. So, while one man questioned, another put the answers down, and at the close of an hour's talk it was found, by a careful summing up, that he was 315 years old, had visited nearly every known country, owned thirty-four ranches, over 80,000 cattle, horses and sheep to match, had served eleven terms in the Legislature and Senate, twice in the national Congress, and just missed going to the United States Senate by one vote, and could have had that if he was disposed to lie, but that he would not do for love, money or fame.

This gentleman is a would-be cow-boy gone to seed, and is what a great many of the so-called cow-boys would be, under circumstances favorable to the development of this species of the animal.



Cow-boy. Dude.

He tooteth his own horn,—he knows how—the dude blows it from the wrong end. (See page 26.)

CHAPTER II.

THE GENUINE COW-BOY.

The above title is not intended to apply to all men who have taken an active part in handling cattle, but to those only who have proven themselves worthy the name of genuine, because of the nobility of character they possess; neither do I wish it understood that I am thus assuming that the genuine cow-boy is altogether faultless, not so. Even the genuine is human and possessed of all the characteristics of frail erring mortality; but one thing I do claim for him is that, in view of his peculiar surroundings, temptations, associations and privations, he is an exceptional character in that he is possessed of qualities both useful and ornamental in any station in life; but especially so with him; isolated as he has formerly been from the refining influences of civilization.

In reality the cow-boy might properly be divided into three classes. First, No. 1, the genuine, because of his true manhood, not only in his relationship to those with whom he is daily associated in handling cattle, but with all the world. One who has as much respect for the rights of others, though he be miles away, as for his immediate neighbors. I mean by that, a man who is strictly honest, one whom it does not affect in his general health to eat a piece of an animal of his own mark and brand. Still, one who is not so pharisaical as to "Thank God he is not as other men," but can throw the mantle of charity sufficiently far as to reach his less scrupulous brother and one who will look to the interest of his neighbor, when on a round-up, as he does his own, no difference what the reputation of that neighbor may be. One who is the happy possessor of the combined characteristics of a true gentleman, a loyal citizen and an all-round business man, with the get-up and get of a cow-boy.

No. 2 is worth consideration. He is the true type of Western hospitality, liberal to a fault, especially in his moral views; so much so that his conscience is possessed of such elasticity as to serve him in any emergency. Like the proverbial Irishman who, upon finding a U. S. blanket, called out "U for Patrick and S for McCarthy. Och but I'm glad I found me blanket. Me father told me that edecation was a good thing and now I know it; but for an edecation I never would have found me blanket." So it is with No. 2; he is peculiarly fortunate in his education, it often assists him in his interpretation of the brands of cattle from the northern range, and enables him to appropriate the same, he is thus financially re-imbursed for his losses during winter's driving storms; he is, however, peculiarly constituted when it comes to eating an animal encumbered with his own mark and brand, it is almost a dead-shot.

If by any misfortune while he is in a distant range some enterprising No. 2 should feed him on some of his own beef, it acts like ipecac. In his own language, "It shore makes him sick," (so I have heard them say,) and such a thing as eating their own is so rare, if they should find it out, it seems not unlikely that the thought of such would cause a re-action in the physical man; it never proves fatal, however, as it is part of his existence to get even.

No. 3 is the roaming, "come day, go day, God send Sunday, good-natured easy-going cow-boy," who is just as happy where he is as where he is not; who cares for nothing but a good saddle, spurs and quirt and a forty dollar job; who seldom aspires to accumulate for himself, but is satisfied to spend his life in working for some one else, and when the season for working cattle is over repairs to the nearest town and spends what he has earned, in having a good time. No. 2 manipulates this latter class in many ways; they, as a rule, will do for him what they would fear to do for themselves, and too often it is the case that No. 2, when in too close a place, in order to save himself will slip the head of some pliable dupe into the halter that justice has designed for his own.

Don't understand by this that I mean to intimate that No. 2 is a thief. No, indeed, if any one should accuse him of such conduct, it wouldn't even ruffle his feelings, as he lives daily in the consciousness that everything he does is on the dead square. No. 2 is simply a rustler from way back, and when it comes to a round-up he's there.

I have given the shady side of the character of No. 2, and I am glad to give you his virtues, and don't wish you to think that I am partial in what I shall say of the sunny side of his life. No. 1 needs no coloring or apology, as his life is a living index to his character; No. 2 needs the mantle of charity very extensively thrown around his wayward shoulders, and it is but just when we consider his environments, the peculiar circumstances under which he has been trained (which will be treated in a separate chapter). It is but charitable to give him credit for the good in his nature.

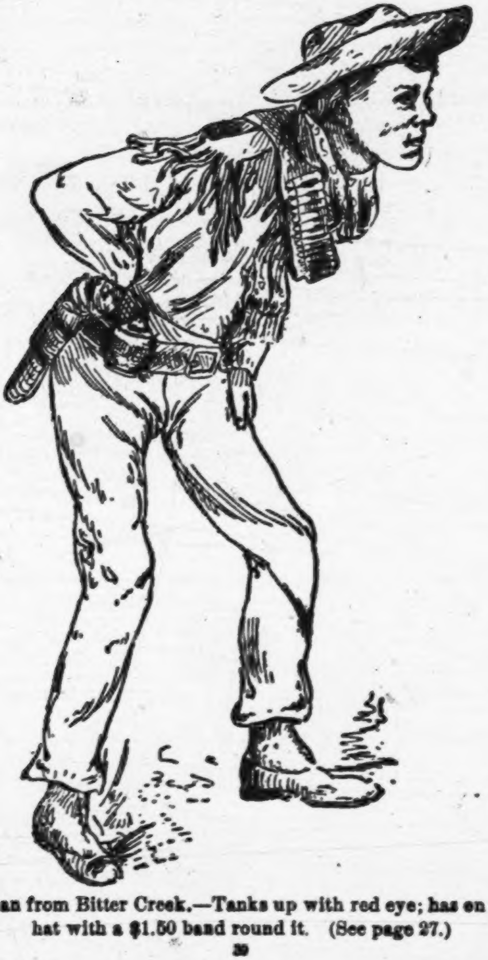
No. 2, with some exceptions, is a neighbor to be proud of; he has nothing too good to divide, you know when you enter his home that you are welcome. There is an air of freedom that one can feel sensibly pervading the home of No. 2 that inaudibly but positively breathes a hearty welcome. You needn't expect him to neglect any of his duties to entertain you, for he will not, but you have the freedom of the place, let it be large or small.

He will ride twenty miles on a rainy night to bring the doctor for a sick neighbor, or go to the relief of a distressed human being, no difference what his character. All he needs to know is, that they are suffering. If any of his associates, those with whom he "stands in," should be so far misunderstood as to get arrested he will go to his rescue, and as a rule is able to make satisfactory explanation and secure a verdict; this especially applies to dates back of '87. It is now getting to a point, and has been for several years, that jurists and judges are getting so incredulous that the boys have been having considerable trouble to explain their mistakes, and the consequence is that many of them have been sent east to work under the supervision of the State; this is invariably done under protest, and nearly every one who takes a State contract is innocent; and if you don't believe it, you may be convinced by going to Rusk, Texas, and ask them, or to the court records, and almost without exception you will find a plea of "not guilty." A genuine No. 2 never goes back on a friend.

If some unfortunate should come to him in distress, one who is in danger of being "pulled" for "pulling," he will rustle up the best stray horse in the range, borrow a saddle from a sheep man, provided the snoozer is away, and filling him up on good grub, will give him some of his spare cash and let him "lean forward and shove," after giving him some meeting house advice, which, as a matter of course, he takes. No. 2 will guard the interests of his neighbors in the cattle business, and also his stand-by's with jealous care. When he finds cattle in a distant ranch belonging to neighbors, even though it is a poor neighbor, he will drive them for him; and even a nester, if he is a straight man, receives the careful consideration of No. 2, often having the free use of milk cows the year round. In fact, if No. 2 allows him to milk them at all, it is free, the only consideration being that the calves are cared for and not knocked on the head with the churn dasher, to prevent which he usually requires the nester to milk half a dozen or more.

No. 3, on the other hand, sometimes by close application to business, especially if he is a live, energetic rustler, will accumulate sufficient property to take his place in the rank of ranch men. Those who did not accumulate and start in cattle eventually marry and either settle down to engage in grangering, become nesters or take a contract from the State.

There are other characters in the cattle business who will be mentioned in the course of our story but the three classes mentioned include the principal actors in active cattle raising, and the classes herein mentioned will figure prominently in the illustrations as we proceed. In conclusion I wish it understood that my definition of the cow-boy is a big-hearted, whole-souled bundle of humanity, kind-hearted, generous to a fault, possessed of all the frailties common to mankind, and not the biggest rascal on earth by a jug full.



Bad man from Bitter Creek.—Tanks up with red eye; has on a 65c. hat with a $1.50 band round it. (See page 27.)

CHAPTER III.

THE CLASS OF MEN WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE HARD NAME THE TEXAS COW-BOY HAS.

In early days prior to and some years after the Civil War, Texas offered an asylum or city of refuge, as it were, to the criminal scum of creation. This was largely due to the fact that it was almost a wilderness, with no railroads, no telegraph lines and very meagre facilities for transportation and communication.

In the first place, it took men of an iron will and nerve to brook the difficulties to be met with in this, the then far West. It being a frontier country and the field of operation for the wily red man, it is not strange that men were received by the settlers with open arms in that lonely region and no questions asked.

From a personal knowledge, though but a boy during the more trying times, I can remember when one man met another they were friends. It was for mutual protection they embraced each other as brothers, and many no doubt were driven to this section by the force of circumstances, who through the very insecurity of their surroundings and the knowledge of a probable early call from this to the great unknown, were drawn by the chords of—the secret of all fellow feeling—sympathy, to a closer union with their fellow beings with whom they were sharing the perils of life on the frontier. As sympathy is akin to love and love is the foundation of right living, many such characters have grown to be our best citizens. I have in mind a few such who were arrested and taken back to their former homes to answer charges for crime committed in years gone by. They were almost invariably cleared and sent back to their family.

On the other hand, many came and instead of becoming better, gathered round them congenial spirits who like themselves were outlaws from other more populous States and they are the ones who painted towns red, caused discord and confusion in the range, that made life and property insecure in Texas. They proved a greater scourge to the State than ever the Indian with his war paint could do. This class of people have given the State the name of being tough and have caused many good people to shudder at the thought of making their homes there.

This condition has developed in the main since the war. There seems to have been a general rush to Texas after the cessation of hostilities, of all the renegades both north and south, those who took no part on either side, and took advantage of those unfortunate times to give free range to their inbred tendencies to rob and pillage the defenseless, were the worst.

Prior to the war such a thing as cattle or horse stealing was seldom heard of except by the Indians, in fact for years after the war closed a man that would steal a horse was looked upon as a worse character than if he killed a man. The reason for such a state of feeling is not clear, unless it was because the majority of men that were killed were either of the renegade class before referred to or some one who had mated with them, and the majority of horse thieves were of this very class who came to Texas to save their own necks and for the purpose of living without work.

The beginning of cow stealing began during the last years of the war. There were a few men who by hook or crook kept out of the conflict, remaining at home presumably to care for the women and children, look after the "stuff" and see that the "Yankees" didn't get away with "Our Niggers."

These men, or some of them, spent the greater portion of their time the first three years in the profitable and interesting business of speculating on the probable length of time it would take the South to lick the "Yankees," and as an observant boy I can safely say that I have seen as many as twenty of these lords of creation sitting round the corner store whittling, spitting tobacco juice and in the characteristic language of the cow puncher "swapping lies" from morning until noon and from noon until dark for months, and their wives at home carding and spinning thread and weaving cloth to make them pants to wear out on the curb-stone.

The men who had with energy and pluck by caring for their cattle accumulated goodly herds were as a rule the ones who, when called upon to fight for what was presented to them as personal liberty and State's rights, the first to respond. The genuine cattleman, though easily led to a conclusion, is not the man to shirk a duty. I mean, of course, as a rule. There are exceptions to all rules.

Leaving his cattle as he did to look after themselves, he was compelled to trust to luck, so-called, as to whether he would ever see them again. The gentleman of leisure herein referred to or, more properly speaking, the whittling deacons who had been living off the misfortunes of others by eating other men's cattle, seeing the fortunes of the Confederacy waning, decided to raise cattle of their own. One little circumstance will suffice to show their method of raising them.

There was one old Methodist brother who owned an old cow known in the community as "old Crump," owing to the fact that her horns turned round in front until they very nearly met. It was noticed that every few days the old brother would drive in a yearling with no mark or brand, and soon it would be seen to carry round with it the old gentleman's brand. If any one asked him where he got it his reply was always the same, "It is old Crump's yearling," until it became quite a proverb, and by actual count old Crump's increase in one year amounted to forty-seven year olds, thirty-one two year olds and thirteen three-year-old cows and calves, besides keeping a large family in beef. Now if some enterprising "Yankee" will only secure some of old Crump's stock and start a stock farm and call them thoroughbreds, his fortune is made. But I am here to tell you, my friend, you can't do it, for the day of wholesale cattle stealing is gone and that is the name we Texas people give it.

This same old bag of corruption, after it became a penitentiary offense to steal a yearling, sat on the jury and convicted a sixteen-year-old boy for branding a little scrub calf. After he had stolen himself into respectability, he was the first old donker to cry out "stop thief." The poor old sinner has gone to meet his God. But when he gets a seat in the heavenly choir with a golden crown to adorn his brow and the beautiful white robe of the saints shall encircle his poor perjured soul, then the devil had better double-bar the regions of the damned or his kingdom will be depopulated. No, I don't believe that any one who dies with no show of restitution for such corruption, with no acknowledgment of his wrongs, will ever enter the pearly gates of the New Jerusalem.

There were a great many renegades who came in, at, or near the close of the war that started cattle stealing in reality; they played a high hand for a time, and some few Texans joined them, but some how or other the disease went in on a great number of them, the trouble developed into a choking sensation and they died very suddenly of a broken neck. I believe the most popular name for the disease is hanging. I don't wish for once to be understood to advocate such a course, I am only relating facts and not theories. I am opposed to mob law and no one in Texas pretends to defend it on any other ground than that desperate diseases require desperate remedies.

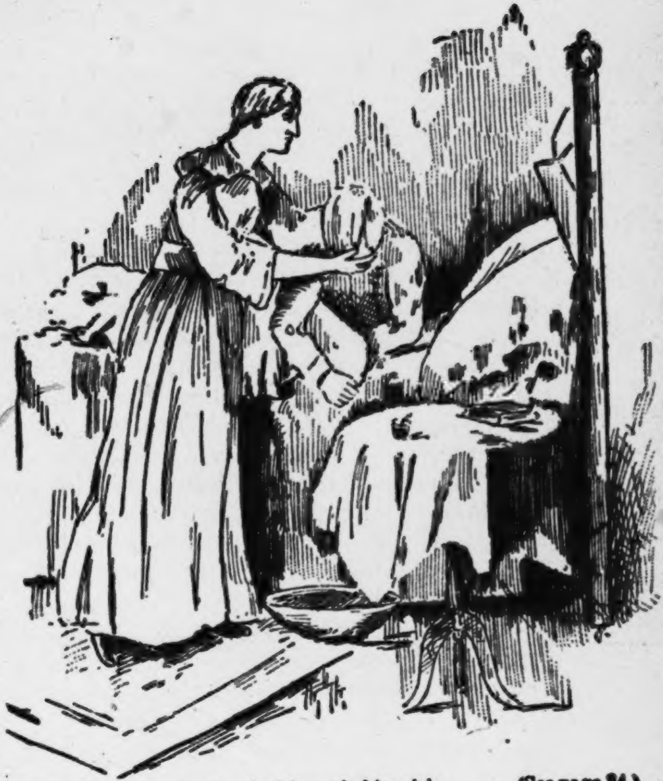
If I was to theorize on the causes leading to such things I would lay it all at the door of our franchise laws that grant an unqualified vote to everything that wears breeches. Ignorant, unscrupulous and irresponsible voters elect ignorant, unscrupulous and irresponsible law-makers who pass unwholesome and unhealthy laws, and the same ignorant, unscrupulous and irresponsible voters elect the same class of executive officers, thus making it possible for a criminal to swear out, lie out and prove out of anything, until honest men become desperate and in the heat of passion, engendered by such a state of things, they take the laws into their own hands and thus become criminals themselves.

I don't believe it safe for any community or that crime was ever lessened by such a course. Yet, on the other hand, I don't think there have been many innocent men who ever suffered by the mob except when two factions have waged war among themselves, when no doubt some good people have suffered, but the community at large was not responsible for it.

In conclusion, I will say that observation and experience have clearly taught me that it was not the native cow-boy who painted towns red, and gave cattlemen a hard name, but the renegade from the East and North; while the native Texan was not, nor is he now, an angel, still it is a wonder that he is as good as he is, considering his education and his association with his neighbor from the older States, and but for the fact that he had a backbone of his own, he would certainly have been a "little bouquet of sun-flowers."

In proof of what I have said I will respectfully refer you to our criminal records. There you will find that the native criminal (that got caught), is but a very small factor in our court records; aside from the negro and Mexican, our Texas birds are in a large majority from other States.

My reader, you may think me egotistical. That I



He ate his own beef.—And it made him sick. (See page 34.)

am partial to the cow-boy is but natural, as a lifelong association with the knight of the quirt, spur and tug, has given me a knowledge of his real worth; still I deny the charge of egotism, and in justification of my claims, I leave it to any man who has spent five years in the Lone Star State, west of the Brazos river, especially if he has shared their blanket, their beef and bread, laughed at their jokes, and heard them sing their cow-boy songs. I know what his verdict will be.

With all his faults, and he has his share, he has a heart in him as big in its willingness as the Texas Capitol, is a friend in need and a friend indeed, and his soul is as precious in the sight of Him who says "Whosever will may come" as the wealthiest nabob who walks the streets of New York. My personal observation and experience have taught me that no man living has a greater regard for the feelings of others than has the cow-boy.

When coming through Arkansas some white-livered, drunken cur fired into our train. It made me feel quite irreligious to hear some of the passengers say that it was "some of those Texas cow-boys." I never knew but one outfit in Texas that would have hired and kept a man on the ranch that would do such a thing, and I don't believe that one out of every five hundred of the cow-boys who have figured in cattle in Texas would do such a thing. They have more personal self-respect and, as a rule, they have too much respect for women to do anything that would frighten them or endanger their precious lives.

No, friend, the cow-boy is a bundle of fun, but pure unadulterated cussedness is not one of the ingredients in his composition. He is rolicky, but not mean. You may say what you please about your Eastern civilization, and I grant that in some localities you are far in advance of Texas in some things. But, remember, I am now talking of the cow-boy and I have witnessed things in some of your Eastern cities and towns that I never saw, and that would never occur in any Western town in Texas. I mean incivilities to ladies or, what I, with my unvarnished ideas, would call uncivil treatment.

I have seen ladies forced to abandon the sidewalk on account of the crowds of men congregated there, and while I have seen from fifty to one hundred cattlemen at one time I never saw one refuse to give his room to a lady, let it be on the sidewalk, in a street car or on a railroad train. He may jog along in a kind of a "don't give a cent if I do" sort of a style with men, but is always the quintessence of good behavior when there are women around.

I have met him in the camp, on the round-up, round the herd, at a frolic, in the rain, when the sunshine was making all nature ring with her chiefest joy, the light. I have seen him under any and all circumstances, and never do I remember having seen any man who will give better attention at church or a lecture, or who is more considerate of the feelings of others. Honesty, plain and unvarnished, in presenting the great subject of Christianity to his consideration will catch him much sooner than all the clap-trap plans adopted by so many workers. As a rule he is a reasoner after his own system, and when dealing with him be certain your argument is backed with God's word or, as he would put it, "with bible." The two most essential qualifications in dealing with the cow-boy in his soul's interest are tact and tenderness.

Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,
  Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave;
Weep o'er the erring one, care for the fallen,
  Tell them of Jesus the mighty to save.

Down in the human heart, crushed by the tempter,
  Feelings lie buried that grace can restore;
Touched by a loving heart, wakened by kindness,
  Chords that were broken will vibrate once more.

Rescue the perishing, duty demands it,
  Strength for thy labor the Lord will provide;
Plead with them earnestly, plead with them gently,
  Tell them a Savior for sinners hath died

Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,
  Jesus is merciful, Jesus will save.

CHAPTER IV.

SENSATIONAL STORIES, THEIR RESULTS.

Since the serpent approached our mother Eve in the garden of Eden with a lie in his mouth, we have a record of the presence of the demon all along down the vista of the years; he has dragged his slimy folds across the threshold of peaceful and otherwise happy lives, and as in the case of the illustrious pair, who first partook of the sweets of counnubial bliss in peaceful innocence, only to have their cup of happiness crushed by the tempter. So with their posterity from then until now, we find history so full of the presence of this grim monster of deceit with its crowning results, bitterness and woe, that one is made to shudder at the recital.

All along through the pages of Holy Writ do we find portrayed in graphic detail the direful results of the false statement, even the grandest characters of ancient times, whose lives we have recorded therein, stand under the shadow. Abraham denies his wife and comes near to bringing ruin to a nation which had befriended him, and certainly brought shame and mortification to himself. So with his illustrious son Isaac, guilty of the same crime. Jacob stole the blessing of his elder brother and was made to suffer for a lifetime in consequence.

It is one of the truest and most universally tested facts recorded in God's word that "God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

David through deceit brought about the death of one of his most valiant soldiers and this entailed upon his posterity endless trouble and disgrace. The counselors of the heathen king Darius by deceit had Daniel cast into the den of lions and by so doing brought destruction upon their wives and children as well as themselves. This grim deceiver comes under many fashionable names in this the advanced day and age of the world, the nineteenth century.

It is called exaggerating, a stretch of the imagination, misrepresentation, prevarication and numerous other very paliating aliases, but the unvarnished, unpolished cow-boy calls it "lying ". Many good credulous fellows have read those exaggerated stories of life in the far west on a Texas cow ranch and have had education quite bitter in the school of experience for their ignorance and want of judgment.

They come to Texas perhaps with good capital, the result of years of patient work and economy on the part of a good and indulgent father, who has "divided unto them his living." They wish to engage in business that promised fabulous returns. The first thing they do, in the majority of cases, is to show how much they know, and in the presence of an outfit of regulars, they make complete donkeys of themselves. They often play out in three rounds, some of them make good use of their experience, and some of them let some sharper invest for them and they go halves in the proceeds ; the result is the old story of "capital and experience," the two soon swap places (however, the rule is not without exceptions).

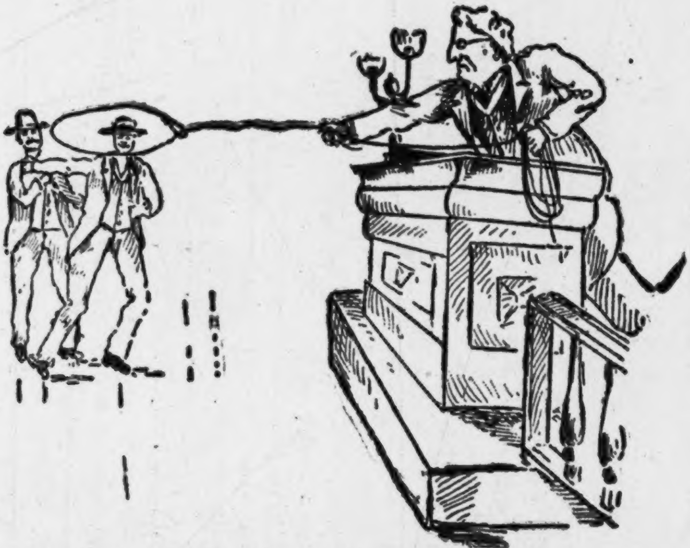
One circumstance that I recall was a young man who came to Texas in '82; he had in cash $30,000 to invest in a ranch. He landed in a Western town, met some of the boys, and made known his intentions; he also made free to state that he was "onto" cow-boys, but wished to thoroughly learn the ropes, etc.; so they took him in hand, learned first his ideas concerning the business, blowed him in for $100, for an old stove-up pony, a sixty-five dollar saddle, a pair of flashy red blankets, spurs, quirt, rope and leggings, cow-boy hat, two six-shooters and a long keen knife; after tanking him up on red liquor they started him out to paint the town red, taking care all the while to keep their own necks out of the halter, which a cow-boy knows just how to do.

This young man allowed himself rushed into making a ridiculous picture of himself by appearing on the streets whooping like an Indian on the war-path, firing off his pistols and running that old stove-up pack pony up and down the streets until the sheriff got hold of him and run him in; he then allowed himself further imposed upon, by cursing the judge, according to instructions. The fine and costs amounted to $150, before he got through. He made bond for his appearance and then went with the outfit to the ranch. Next morning when he awoke, he was all alone, horse, saddle, blankets and everything he had started with, gone. They had made him drunk and robbed him of everything while he was asleep, and were in hiding to see the effect on him. He looked all around, and then hit the road and began to cut dirt for town, a sadder but wiser man. Some of the boys followed him at a safe distance with his outfit, and when they saw him get in a farmer's wagon, they surrounded him, beat him to town and hitched his horse where he could find him when he came in. The man of whom he bought the horse went to him and gave him back his money, took the old horse off his hands and gave him five hundred dollars worth of good advice in a few words. That young man, unlike many who started just as he did, took the advice, went to work, learned the cattle business and afterward became a reasonably good cattleman, but like a great many of the more visionary among the boys went under in the great rise and fall of cattle from 1880 to 1885.

At one time there came an old gentleman from the Eastern States to western Texas and bought two thousand choice steers; he was one of those genial characters sometimes to be met with in most any station in life, who are as happy at one time as another, no difference what their surroundings may be, and let me tell you right here that this is the most fortunate disposition for one to possess who goes among cow-men.

He will have less trouble and get less skin knocked off his shins. But of all the unfortunate characters who ever came into the clutches of a cow-boy, the braggadocio, self-important smart Aleck is the worst. But I am deviating. This old gentleman came to receive the cattle, and drove out to the camp in a two-horse spring wagon, or hack as it is called in the West. He wore a silk hat. The camp was located near a spring of water, under a large live oak tree, whose evergreen foliage covered "way up yonder" close to a quarter of an acre of ground. It was a lovely summer day, a trifle too warm in the sun, but a gentle breeze made it delightful in the shade.

Our Mr. N—— had located his claim on the southern boundary of the massive roots of the tree, and was enjoying a snooze. He laid his hat by his side; the cook was busy about the dinner, so the old fellow was left to enjoy himself according to his own sweet will. Chuck time drew near and the boys, fifteen or twenty of them, came riding into camp for the purpose of eating something up. As they approached the place where Mr. N—— was, the tramp of their horses' feet disturbed his slumbers and when once fairly awake he heard the boys, who had stopped within twenty or thirty feet of where he lay, commenting on something. One said: "What must we do," another said, "What is it?" one said "It's a bear," another, "It's the venomous kypoote," another said "It's one of those things that flee up and down the creek and hollowed 'walo wahoo,' in the night time." One called out, "Boys, it's a shame to stand peaceably by and see a good man devoured by that varmint," and calling loudly to the now thoroughly excited old man to "Look out there, mister, that thing will bite you," at the same time drawing his pistol. Mr. N. sprang to his feet like a ten-year-old boy (as some of the boys put it, got a ten-cent move on him), and didn't stop to get his hat. He had perhaps gotten ten or fifteen feet from his pre-emption when almost every man in the outfit, fired (some of them two or three bullets,) into that silk hat, simply shooting the crown off.



Shifting the responsibility.—No. 2 slips some cow-puncher's head in the judicial lariette. (See page 85.)

The bewildered old fellow was so thoroughly scared that it was some time before he noticed what it was that had come so near devouring him; in fact not until one of the boys dismounted, took a stick and turned it over and said, "Boys, it's shore dead." Our good-natured old friend, after recovering from his scare, took a hearty laugh over the little jambore and called the boys all 'round to his wagon and drew out a jug of sixteen-shooting liquor—thus they celebrated the death of the terrible varmint.

One of the boys loaned the jolly old boy his hat, and he wore an old one until he could get one from town, when they all chipped in and bought one of the best to be had, a regular cow-man's hat, and gave it to Mr. N. Besides, they offered to pay for his, which he positively refused to let them do. Bnt one thing certain, he hadn't been in that outfit three days until every man on the ranch, even to the cook, would have fought his battles for him, if occasion had presented itself.

Now, there is just that in the average cow-boy that would be called stubbornness in more "civilized society." If Mr. N. had gotten mad and caved 'round a little he would have been told that if he expected to bring wild animals into camp and not have them killed he was simply off his base, and they would have kept up the theory of "that terrible varmint that was killed." One thing, however, I will state, if they had known when they rode up that Mr. N. was a man as old as fifty they would never have "killed the animal," neither would they have offered any comment on it in his presence; but he was a man who carried age remarkably well and one would not, on short acquaintance, have taken him for more than 38 or 40.

A great number of men come to Texas under a false impression in regard to the character of the cow-boy and are brought to grief. Those who are willing to make the best of their experience, take him as they find him, treat him as a human being, though a rough one, and are willing to see his virtues and cultivate his friendship, they never lose anything by so doing, but find in him a friend who, with rare exceptions, never goes back on a chum or betrays a trust. In other words, many of them are diamonds in the rough.

This is evident from the fact that many of the most substantial citizens of our Star State, especially that portion which was once the great grazing pastures for the long-horned Texas cow, were once the heedless, free and easy cow-boy. Some of whom went busted and had sufficient practical common sense to locate a claim, settle down to business, making first-class grangers.

Others stuck to the old heifers through the panic, and have been rewarded for their faithfulness. If you have the range the old Texas cow will grow you out of an almost overwhelming difficulty.

The commonly accepted proverb of the cow-boy is: "The way of the transgressor is hard and the prayers of the wicked availeth nothing." (I don't quote this as scripture, for it is not.)

For a man to come to the range and assume that he knows as much as an old-timer, was a transgression that made his lot a hard one. If he wickedly persisted in being civilly treated, his prayer was unavailing.

But if he took his medicine like a little man, he was soon "in the swim," and ready to enjoy the discomforts of the next victim. Such is life in a cow camp.

CHAPTER V.

THE BEGINNING OF CATTLE STEALING IN TEXAS ON A LARGE SCALE.

Before the war and for many years afterward, cattle stealing in Texas was virtually licensed. Don't understand by this that our honorable law-makers granted a regular license to men for so much money, to steal cattle. Not that. It was simply a finable offense to steal a cow. It was a license on the same plan that gambling and other like offenses against the peace and dignity of the State of Texas and other States, specially in the cities, have been permitted to be carried on, a kind of an understanding with the peace officers that at regular intervals they should pay their fines and run on undisturbed until the next regular grub time with the officers came round. The only difference being that a man's time for contributing to the State for stealing was not a stated one, coming only when he was caught, or some poor fellow, who couldn't steal as fast as some other fellow, put up a job on him and had him pulled.

He would then come up and either plead guilty or fight it. In either case, if he was found guilty the fine was $20, which he easily paid and could steal enough cattle in a short time to double his investment.

Stealing cattle prior to the war was a rare thing. Perhaps one reason being they were hardly worth stealing, another, the country was so sparsely settled and the Indians were so "rolicky" it took a good part of the time to look after them. It was made a felony in 1873. As I have before stated, some old fellows who were too cowardly to go to the war and too lazy to work began the business before the war closed. Thus giving the introductory pages to the subsequent history of cattle and horse stealing in Texas which prevailed for many years to an alarming extent.

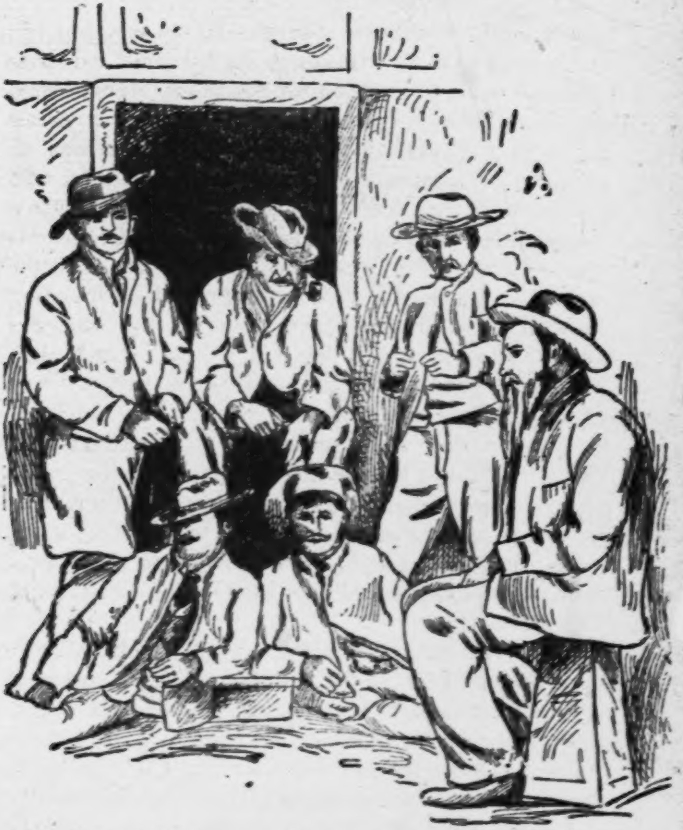
But to the credit of a reconstructed order of things be it said, the business has been waning for the past five years, and has dwindled down to such a point that there are but two classes who "monkey" with other people's cattle now. They are the natural born fool, and the fellow who has stolen a sufficient amount to make him respectable and who has it down to a science.

There has been so much written about the Mavrick that it seems useless to mention the origin of the term. Some one may wish to know however. The original Mr. Maverick located in southern Texas and being constitutionally a ' merciful man,' he had so much mercy on his animals as to refuse to mark and brand them and in the cattleman's parlance if you should ask concerning the ownership of any animal, the answer would be according to the brand the animal bore. For illustration: Suppose we should find a cow belonging to Westmore whose brand is X W, called cross W, I ask: "Whose cow is that?" the answer would be "That is a cross double U and Mr. Maverick having no mark or brand when they came across an unmarked one it was called a Mavrick.

After the war, when the poor, half-starved, weather and war-beaten fellows returned, those who had left cattle went to work to make up for lost time, and those who had none, to get even for their four years of service. And it soon became a sort of general scramble as to who should get the greatest number, and on account of thousands of cattle having become wild and unruly because of neglect a very general license was granted, or rather taken, to kill and eat when one was hungry. Thus it was that the majority of people who lived in the West became involved in branding Mavricks, and killing strays, which at that time was not looked upon as stealing, but a kind of pull dick pull devil, the devil-take-the-hindmost sort of way of securing all the cattle one could.

This, in after years, produced a regular harvest of thieves. After it became theft the habit of taking what one could get his hands on, regardless of its origin, simply accepting it as so much found, and therefore legitimate prize, became so fixed on many that they never could quite comprehend how hard it was to quit until they were run in.

The circumstances leading to a change in the laws may be briefly stated as follows: A great many of the more active and better equipped among the scramblers began to accumulate large herds, and as there were no pasture fences then, they were compelled to turn their cattle loose on the range. The less thrifty and more extravagant classes refused to recognize the rights of the growing nabobs to have their unbranded calves left alone, while they were still keeping up their old game of branding Mavricks indiscriminately, and



The Lords of Creation stayed home to keep the Yankies from getting "Our Niggers." (See page 42.)

the little fellows thus antagonized their former associates. The consequence was the wholesale thieves, now grown powerful, had the legislature pass laws making it an offense against the peace and dignity of the State to brand and mark a calf that didn't belong to him.

Then began the battle that for years waged unceasingly until the big fish swallowed up the little ones. We had as a result the cattle king and the common cow-puncher. The real difference being that the king no longer had to do his own stealing, for he was able to hire the cow-puncher to do it for him, and if the poor cow-puncher presumed to steal a little scrub for himself once in a while, the king wouldn't kick unless some one tried to raise a fuss about it. If he could settle it without too much noise he would do it, and thus add one more link to the poor boy's chains with which to hold him in line. If there was too much noise about it, the king turned honest and sent him down East to work for Texas.

The rule above laid down has some honorable exceptions, but this is in brief what Mavricking led to. When the business first began there were men with cattle who had never stolen, that really believed they were forced to do as other men in self-defense, who began taking lessons in stealing and wound up in the penitentiary. Some became wealthy, and, thanks to true manhood, we are able to record that some men preferred to let poverty enter their home than that truth and honesty of purpose be dispossessed of their legitimate throne. One instance I recall with pleasure is the example set by my father, and, though with shame I confess it, I did not altogether follow that noble Christian object lesson. Still, I look back with pride to the living testimony left by him, and am not ashamed to be known as one of his boys where he spent the greater portion of his life. When it seemed that he and my grandfather, who were partners in cattle, would simply go to the wall if they did not, in self-defense, do as others were doing.

Grandfather said to him: "This won't do, we must protect our interests;" so they fitted up an outfit and started on a round-up. They drove in perhaps five hundred range cattle, nearly all cows, calves and yearlings, among them some two hundred and fifty unbranded ones. Father and grandfather were sitting on the fence, and I, as a little "tow-head," naturally would perch myself beside them.

When the boys had marked and branded those following the JIM and the Big S cows some one threw a rope on a yearling that was following a cow of some other brand. The cow ran out of the bunch, bawling round the calf. As quick as flash father called out: "Don't put my brand on that one." The boys stopped and looked at each other and then at grandfather, evidently waiting for his decision. Very soon he said: "Don't put my brand on it either." So they put the brand of its mother on it, and thus my father and grandfather took the first step toward their financial wreckage.

But my father left to his children the legacy of an honest name, better by far, in the substantial scale of moral worth, than all the cattle that ever trod the great grass fields of the Southwest. If he had taken another course the results to his children might have been as with many others, ruin and disgrace. The wild associations and environments of the day came near wrecking some of them as it was, but the memory of his counsel with the guiding hand of One who hears and answers prayer has prevailed, coupled with the strong will of a loving mother who knew how to harness justice and love to the vehicle of parental advice and correction by means of a bridle rein or the elastic sole of an old slipper. The bunch of boys and two girls are now moving smoothly along, and bid fair to make the average citizen.

I.

When my mother called me Willie, or even simple Will,
I knew that all was smiling within the family mill;
But when she called out "William" my flesh began to crawl,
I knew I'd trampled under foot some precept great or small.

II.

When the angry passion gathered on her gentle loving brow,
She stooped, withdrew her slipper, I knew there'd be a row;
She'd gently draw me forward, lay me down across her knee,
And interview my trousers twixt that slipper and poor me.

III.

You may talk of Mr. Franklin, with his bottle, kite and
string,
Gathering lightning from a storm cloud while the cloud
was on the wing;
But I tell you, now, my mother, with a slipper and a boy,
Could manufacture lightning A 1 without alloy.

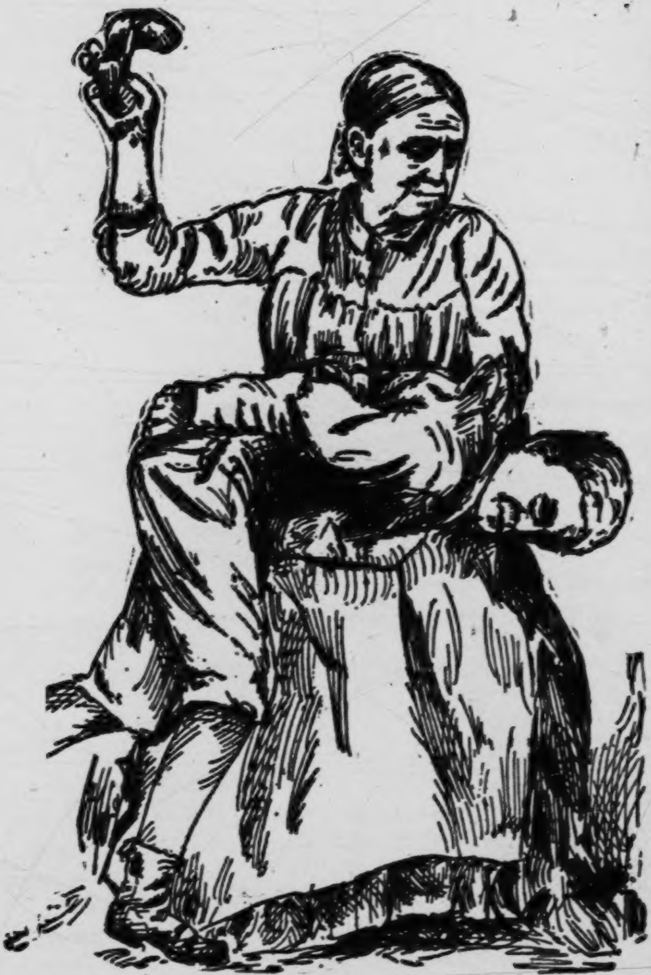
IV.

As to negative, I cannot tell, but positive-ly know
My mother had the thing down fine full thirty years ago;
She couldn't light a city quite, or run a street railway,
But knew just how to raise her boys, and did it every day.

V.

She used no zinc or carbon when she charged my battery,
But played upon my trousers seat with a dogwood hickory;
But mother knew my needs quite well, it did me good—
just so,
It kept the hide from growing close, and made a fellow
grow.

As a rule the men who grew rich in the cattle business were the ones who were the best rustlers and who stuck the closest to business, let that be in branding mavricks or looking after the ones they had already branded. Some who started out very prosperously, just as soon as fortune began to smile upon them, lost their heads, and the consequence was they entered the field of speculation to the neglect of their cattle,



The way my mother raised her boys, with a bridle rein or the elastic sole of an old slipper. (See page 69.)

Their business became wrecked upon the great sea of adventure.

The majority of men who stuck to stealing and raising, coupled with watching out for number one, and who did not go wild over the boom in cattle of 1880 to 1885, but sold instead of buying, are the men who are now called colonel and whose names are sticking to the money end of first national banks and other money enterprises. To make this a little more palliating to some of them who are just a trifle sensitive in regard to their former connection with cattle stealing (or mavricking I should have said), I will state frankly that I believe it just possible that some cattle men who made their start after the first great tidal wave of wholesale mavricking (or stealing I should have said) were strictly honest, as much so as possible for a man to be in the business and hold his own.

It is not every man who is prominently connected with first national banks that made his start in cattle who can be accused of being a thief; in fact, they are, in a large majority, honest men, now. But, remember, I am not speaking of now, but it was then. Show me a man who began in the cattle business as early as '68 or '70 who did not go busted, who can truthfully say that he never ate stray beef, never branded cattle whose ownership was questionable, and I will show you a man too good for Texas or Chicago.

I don't mean to say that those who went busted were saints, for the great majority of the thieves went busted. I believe that those who got their money in that way will yet live to reap the whirlwind, for an all-seeing eye that never sleeps looks down upon them, and though they may be living to-day as straight as the rule of eternal truth, still the stern decree has gone forth: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked, for whatsover a man soweth that shall he also reap."

Many good men have been and are still engaged in the cattle business, and honorable exceptions could, perhaps, be found to the rule here laid down, but they are so scarce that they have been woefully neglected. Take the man who weathered the gale and came out on top, as a rule they are big-hearted fellows, and in many instances they have not been spoiled by the milk and cider homage of a money-loving world, for they recognize the fact that it is not for themselves they are toadied to and called "captain," but for their money.

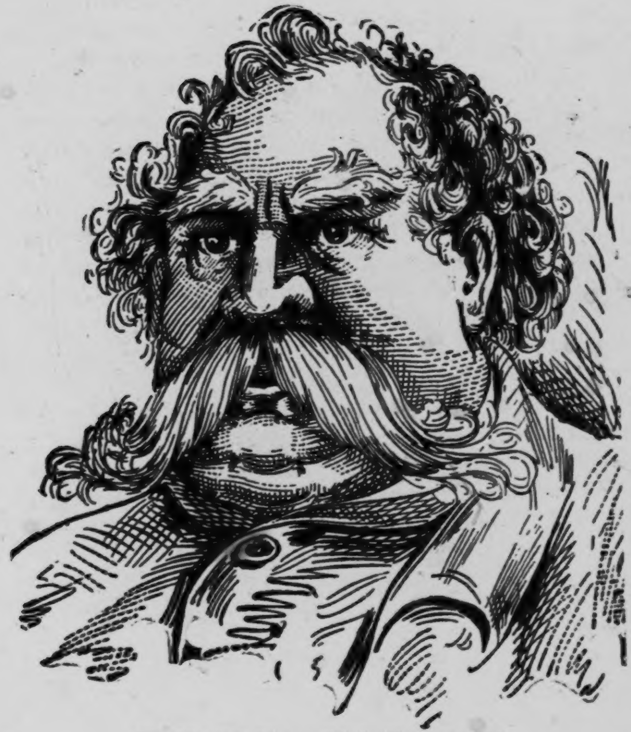
They are the same old Jim and Bob they were when they divided blankets with their less fortunate comrades. They were once cow-boys, and when they meet one of the old fellows that went under, they are still on the bed ground as of old. They can get down and eat broiled beef with as good grace as twenty years ago. But, on the other hand, there are some who will set up and lie like dogs, just to tickle the fancy of greenhorns. They get so stuck up that if an old stove up cow-puncher should approach them in company and call them by the old name they would scowl at him as if he were a hungry cayote. I have seen but few of this class, however, and of all the contemptible old cow thieves on earth it is the old donker who has stolen himself into respectability and then with his thieving old carcass togged up in a $50 suit of clothes bought with his ill-gotten gains to see him stacked up on a jury to try some boy for stealing a $5 yearling is simply too much to contemplate.

It is certainly very amusing to a crowd of cow-boys to read newspaper articles sometimes written about K-E-R-N-E-L, B——, C——or D—— and how he made his start by honest energy and pluck. The energy might have been honest, but the plucking part is what amuses the boys who know just how he used to pluck everything he could get off with. There is really no place for the honest part in his whole get-up. It is a wonder to me sometimes how they can stand to read such articles without choking. I suppose their swallow is like their conscience, very elastic and stretches well.

I remember once hearing my father speaking to a neighbor boy in regard to a yearling which the boy was about to brand; the calf's mother came running up—she had another man's brand on her. Father said, "Ed, I had just as soon steal a horse as that yearling." "I had rather," said the inexorable youth, "for there would be more money in it." And this is the principle upon which many men run the cattle business, the more they could steal the better pleased they were with their work.

I remember a story told on an old vinegaroon preacher, one of those old fellows who branded mavricks during the week, or hired it done, and preached on Sunday to pay for it. As some of the boys put it, he had to do something to square accounts with the Lord. He was a great stickler for water. One Sunday while preaching on the subject of baptism he related what some Methodist brother had to say about the work of John the Baptist at Jordan. He became very much exercised over it. The brother had said that maybe John had a long-handled dipper with which he dipped the water out of Jordan and poured it on the people. The old preacher called out in stentorian tones (and he had a voice like a Spanish burro), "How long was that dipper handle?" after a pause, "How long was that dipper handle?" after a longer pause in louder tones than before, he called out again, "How long was that dipper handle I say?" An old lady of the Methodist persuasion arose to her feet and pointing her fat, chubby finger at the preacher said: "About as long as your branding iron handle you branded my calves with, parson."

The old fellow stood rooted to the spot for the moment and then said: "Let us pray." He was a jolly old fellow and often told the story on himself. Whether it was true or not I can not say. I will leave it for the reader to guess.



The bloated old cow thief. (See page 74.)

CHAPTER VI.

THE DIFFERENT CHARACTERS TO BE MET WITH IN RANCH LIFE—THE MANNERS OF COW-MEN.

In writing on the subject of "Life on a Texas Ranch," I don't wish it understood that there is any cast-iron rule by which one shall judge of the manners and customs of the cow-man, for custom changes on the range as it does in any other section. The methods of work and customs differ as widely in different localities as do the dress of women, and if this is not giving a sufficiently wide range I don't know how to express it. The ranches in southern Colorado and western New Mexico, as well as the "Panhandle of Texas," were conducted on widely different plans, to the ranches in middle and western Texas, and again in the southern part of the State there was a marked difference.

I am treating of the special features of ranch life as noticeable in central and western Texas, being the range with which I was most familiar. It is true I had some experience in various ranges and more observation than actual experience, but my substantial knowledge is confined to the locality above named. While the cattle-man is not a straight-edge, has no cast-iron rule as the guide of his life in handling cattle, still take him wherever you find him and he is much the same in many respects. Many people think the cow-boy is an ignoramus as far as books are concerned, and many of them have had but meagre advantages, but many more have been educated in some of the best institutions in the country.

Out of nine young men, the oldest one in the squad being twenty-eight, who were lounging around a camp-fire one evening, or night as it is termed in the South, after supper, singing, telling stories and having such a jolly time as can only be enjoyed round a camp-fire when every one is duly sober, the conversation turned upon education, and it was ascertained by taking stock that five out of the nine had graduated in Eastern colleges, two of the five being U. V. graduates, and every one of the remaining four having enjoyed the advantages of a common school education.

Yet his education is not especially in letters, except as they are used for brands on cattle. Neither is it simply from A to Z, in lines. It is all round, up and down, over, under and between. Wherever you strike him he is at home, he knows his lesson. They are unlike some people to be met with in life who pass current as scholars, but when taken out of their books, don't know straight up.

The cow-boy goes to the school of nature, learns his lesson from observation and practical experience. He goes by no stipulated rules, cuts no square corners, but takes his bearing and goes straight on. This is the general rule, to which there are exceptions. The manners and practices of different men in camp are as varied as anywhere on earth, some men are good at one thing and no good at another, some are careless of their personal appearance, while others are very careful, but if they fall into lines anywhere it is in point of dress; even the cook will fall into wearing good clothes, especially a good hat, good boots, good pants and overshirt. One man we had in our outfit for years was fit for nothing under the sun but to break our saddle horses. I mean to ride them the first few days until they were sufficiently gentle to be ridden by less adventurous hands, but after a horse was once manageable he was utterly out of place on him. We kept him because he was the best rider that ever took work on the ranch. But the fellow, after a horse was bridle wise, would absolutely go to sleep riding along and sometimes a half tame-horse would suddenly take fright and begin bucking, but he always kept his seat. I never, for the thirteen years I was associated with him, knew him to be thrown from a horse.

When we had no horses to handle if we worked him at all, it was on herd, and then it took one good hand and a boy part of the time to keep him awake (this of course is metaphorically speaking). Some men were good in holding a herd while cutting, some were good in cutting, some good in branding and the majority who stayed with the business were good all-round men. I mean by that, good most anywhere you put them, except the cook. He was the cook.

Some few good hands when on a round-up, and in general work, were no good in camp. Sometimes there would be no special cook and each would, or was supposed to, do his part, but they did not always do it. Some men would ride a tired horse into camp, take off the saddle, throw it on the ground just as it came handiest, maybe horn down; throw the wet blankets down on top of it all in a bunch; hopple him, pull the bridle off, and slash the poor fellow across the back with the bridle rein, thus forcing him to jump his poor tired bones out of range. Usually a man of this type would drop down in the shade of the grub wagon, or some tree and begin to order the cook round.

My observation has been that the man of this character never in the long run made a success in the cattle business. If he did, it was the exception, and was attributable to "nigger luck."

Another character would ride up, remove his saddle, hang it up or spread the skirts, spread his blankets, and lead his panting pony to grass, hopple him, smoothe his mane, speak kindly to him, remove the bridle, and come whistling or singing into camp; lay his bridle down, and look round to see if the water was out or anything short, he would roll up his sleeves, and, speaking kindly to the cook, fly in and help the fellow out.

The busiest time on a ranch is the preparations for the spring round-ups. There are saddles to mend, hopples to make, grub wagons to overhaul and horses to get in shape, shoeing and trimming up, quirts to make, ropes to straighten up, and planning till you can't rest. As there has been so much said and written about a round-up, and so many exaggerated stories told of riding broncho ponies, I shall leave that for others to relate. Suffice it to say, out of everything that has been or can be written one can have a very inaccurate idea of the reality until he has been there and has witnessed it for himself.

But if you can draw on your imagination for a picture I will try to give you what you could see if you was to drive up to a ranch and find them making preparations for a round-up. I give it as I saw it last. Driving in from the north over a prairie country, with now and then a grove of trees, we picked our way down a winding hollow or ravine for one and a half miles, sometimes on one side of the hollow and then on the other. Finally we came out in the open valley that stretches for a mile or more down the creek on either side. Just on the opposite bank of the little creek stood the ranch house, the branding pens off to the west.

In front of the house stood the old grub wagon that had done service for years, with the barrel securely fastened to one side, the grub box sitting in the hindmost end of the bed, with its shelves, and door that dropped down. The cook is now busy cleaning it out—Johnny—God bless him! In fancy I see him now, as he stood there with sleeves rolled up, his pants turned up at the bottom. He had been working so hard the sweat was rolling off his dear old face. He was one of the best-hearted fellows I ever knew, one in whom the milk of human kindness was the predominant trait of character, and whose many virtues made him a universal favorite. He has long since gone to other pastures green.

Just beyond, and in front of the wagon, stood one of the boys, platting a whip. Astride the tongue of the wagon was Charley, mending his saddle, singing, as was his habit when busy. Out at the end of the house one of the boys was scraping some rawhide for hopples, and down the valley, perhaps a hundred yards away, one of the boys came leisurely driving some ponies, some of which still had the hopples on, being too rollicky to allow them taken off. Out on the wood-pile two of the outfit were earnestly trying to make a horse trade, while the remainder of the boys were in the pen branding some horses before starting out.

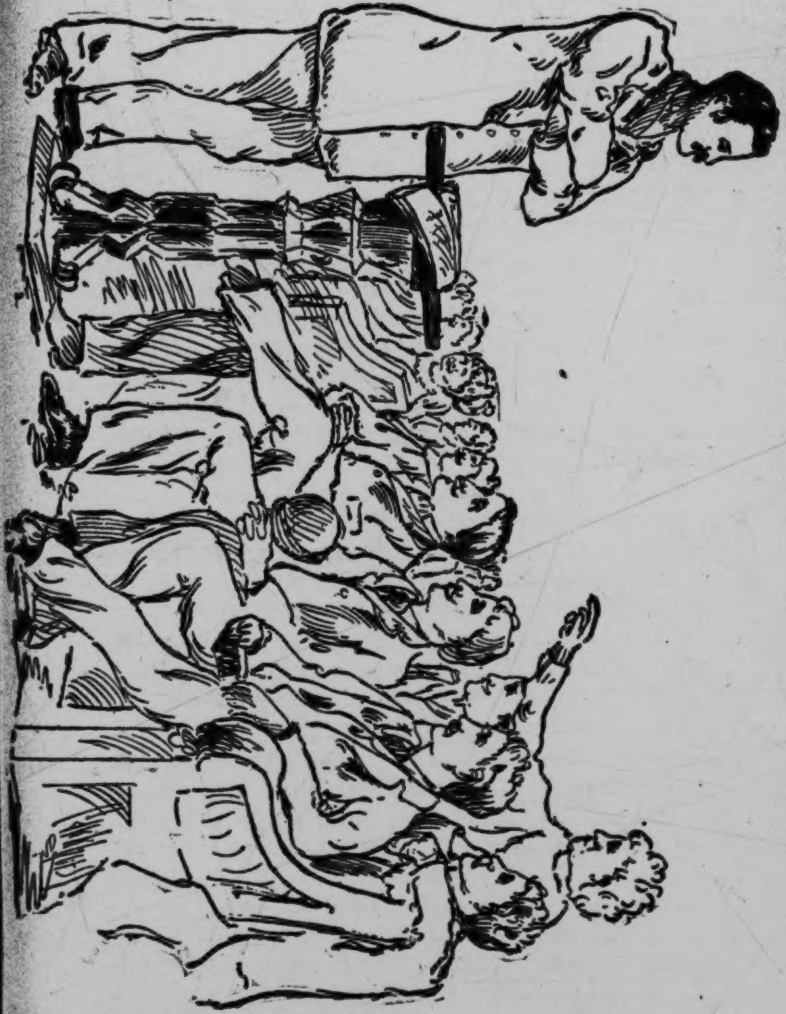
Now, if you wish to know it better, just go down and see for yourself, which you will hardly do, as that has been sixteen years ago, and everything has so changed as to make just such a thing almost an impossibility.

It is rather singular how ranches are named.

It is true that many ranches bear the names of the owners, as the Kieth ranch, Stone ranch, Campbell and Martin ranch, etc.; but many more go exclusively by the name of the brand, as the Cross-ell ranch (X L,) the Be-four ranch (B-4), the Diamond ranch (◊), the Block-er ranch (□ R,) Flower de Luce ranch, the Boot ranch (a boot), the Saddler ranch (a saddle and R).

The naming of horses was as a rule accidental. A new horse let fly and kicked at one of the boys, he went by the name of Heels until he passed in his chips. Another horse we had that was mean to kick never had any name but Dirty Heels. A little colt of fine blood that was left motherless and had to be raised on a bottle happened to come under the special care of one of the children, who one day remarked that it would be a wonder if he lived. He was called Wonder.

The same horse was afterward sold for $300, but still he remained a Wonder.



How long was that dipper handle?
About as long as your branding iron handle you branded my calves with parson. "Let us pray." (See page 76.)

If an outfit bought a horse from a granger the horse almost invariably bore the name of his former owner, no difference how ugly it was. For illustration, we had one horse we got of a man by the name of Kizer, and Kizer was his name; one of a Mr. Dickey, and Dickey was his name. We had one that would put his teeth to a rail, tree or stump and draw as though he was sucking. We called him The Sucker. I might take your precious time for a week, and then not finish.

In naming creeks a chance circumstance would forever settle it. Father had a tussle with a wounded deer—a very large buck—one morning, the deer gave a peculiar whistle or snort, so common to them. The little hollow was, and is until this day, called Buck Snort.

The boys had been out for some weeks and run out of bread, the man they sent for it was delayed on acount of rain and swollen streams, having to go sixty miles. We were camped on a little spring branch and had been living on beef straight for several days, when, our man came driving in with plenty of grub, the little hollow was ever afterward called Happy Hollow.

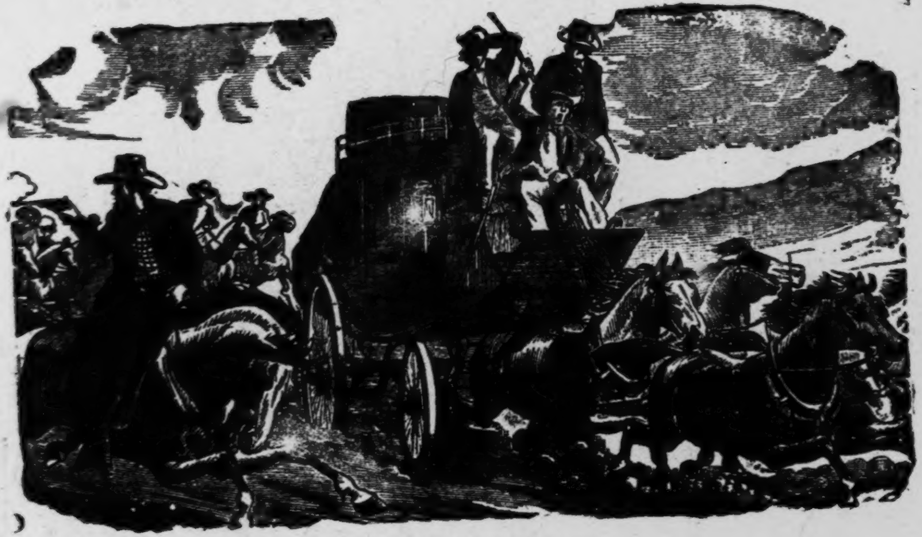
I knew a pony called Happy Jack, because of his contented disposition and his propensity to run and romp. Men were often nick-named in the same way, but oftener from some peculiarity in their personal appearance. One man who measured six and one-half feet and weighed but 135 pounds was called Shorty; one on the contrary, only five feet four inches, was called

Legs; a fellow who was extremely bow-legged was called Shanks. The cook as a rule was called Sallie.

One fellow, who sometimes tried to preach, and who, by the way, was recognized and respected by all the boys as a good man, while on a round-up allowed himself to become so excited one day, as to secure the sobriquet of Yaller. It came about in this way. We were traveling across a mountainous district and some of the boys off to the left side of the herd started a very large bear. Several of them joined in the chase, among them the preacher, who was riding an old yellow horse. As he was passing one of the boys, he was heard to say: "Git up and git, yaller,God bless you, git up and git." Some of the boys were sacrilegious enough to change it from Sunday-school language to something not so nice, but we didn't credit it. However, he was ever after called "Old Yaller." He killed the bear just the same.

I call no names in these short sketches, as many of the dear old boys are still living, and I would not wish to make public any property that is or has so long been "our own" private stock in trade.

Many of the men of whom I speak have gone from this to a better world. When the eternal spring shall come with its never withering grass, when the great Herald shall announce the final great round-up, it is to be hoped that the dear old boys will not all be turned in at the left-hand gate as strays to be "gobbled" up by the thief of human souls, but that they may be found to bear the Master's brand, and earmark of the redeemed of the Lord.



THE ATTACK ON THE STAGE-COACH.

CHAPTER VII.

STYLE ON THE RANCH.

If there is any one thing that has engaged the mind of the majority of the human family more than another in the past, it is the question of their personal appearance, and style or fashion has been as changeable as Texas weather, and I dare say the locality and peculiar people that never change style are the exception. If one should wish to know anything about the rural districts of Old Mexico, they would have to go back four or five thousand years and read in Genesis, but only give them time and they too will change.

In the mountains of eastern Tennessee and the swamps of Louisiana and Arkansas, as well as the piney woods of eastern Texas, they have changed from the old flint-lock to the cap and ball gun, and some of them have quit making their own clothing and wear store clothes, because it is stylish now to wear brown duck instead of "jeans." The cow-boy is no exception to the rule. He has his flights of fancy as clearly defined as the most fashionable French belle.

In 1867, I remember distinctly the style that prevailed, flowing toefenders, narrow stirrup, and the rider stood on his toe. The saddle at that time was almost anything that could be had, but preferably the broad horn standing at an angle of forty-five degrees, pointing heavenward. The bridle was hardly to be called a creation of fancy, as it was all they had, and was made from the hide of a cow, rubbed and grained until it was pliable.

Some men broke the monotony by adopting the Mexican plan of making them of hair, which was a very popular article of which to make ropes. Some made their bridles of rawhide by platting, which made quite an artistic one, some would plait the quirt on the end of the rein. The rope used for catching and handling horses and cattle was a platted one and was one of the best ropes for the purpose I ever used. I have seen a few ropes that were very good, made of rawhide, of three strands twisted and run together. In fact, during, and for several years after the war, long after reconstruction days in Texas, it was said—and not without some foundation—that a Texan could take a butcher knife and rawhide and make a steamboat, of course he could not have made the boiler, but when it came to the top part he would have been at home. One thing certain, if the thing had broken to pieces, he could have tied it up.

During the war his clothing was made from homespun cloth, he had no other, home-made shoes or boots, even his hat was home-made, the favorite hat material being straw. Rye straw was the best. Sometimes a fellow would get hold of a Mexican hat, and then he was sailing.

The popular way for protecting the clothing, was to make a leather cap for the knee and seat of the pants, the more enterprising would make leggins of calf-skin, hair out, and sometimes buckskin with fringe down the side.

By 1872 most everything on the ranch had undergone a change, even some of the boys had changed their range headquarters for sunnier climes, because they had to, some had sold out to a lawyer and had taken a contract from the State; others had changed their spurs and leggins for a crown, harp and wings, and gone to pastures green, perhaps. But especially had style changed, the wool hat, the leather leggins, leather bridle and the broad stirrup; the invention of an old fellow who lived on the Llano river had become so popular that one who was not provided with them was not in the style.

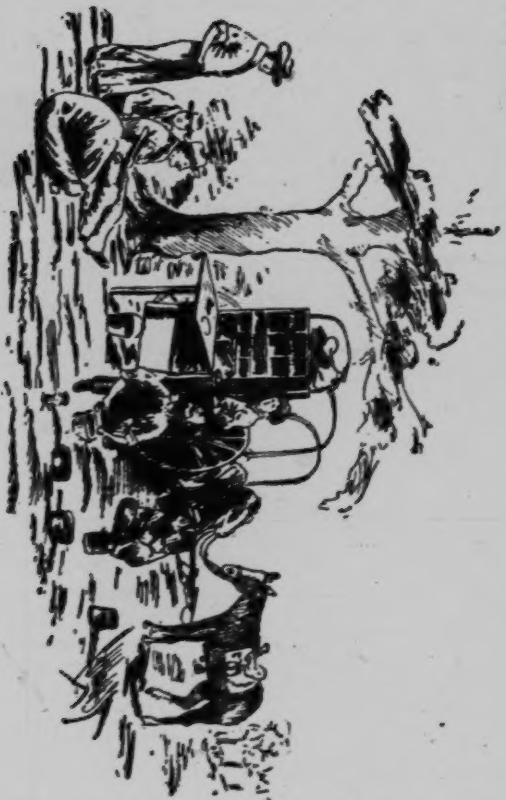
The stirrup was from six to eight inches broad, and the rider drew his leathers so as to ride with legs crooked up considerably. The saddle used was one with a broad flat horn, much higher in front than behind, adorned with saddle pockets, covered with either goat or bear skin. The spur too was another article that changed, the long shank with bells had taken the place of the little straight shank and sharp rowel, the long ones making a curve downward and having long teeth rowels. In this age of the cow-man they wore buckskin gloves with long gauntlets.

The style changed again by '77. The John B. Stetson hat with a deeper crown and not so broad a rim, and the ten-ounce hat took the cake. Up to this date, the high-heeled boots were the rage, and when it was possible to have them, the heel was made to start under the foot, for what reason I never knew, unless it was the same motive that prompts the girls to wear the opera heel in order to make a small track, thus leaving the impression that a number ten was only a six, this I am guessing at and will leave it open for the reader to draw to. By the last named date, '77 or '78, the cow-man had in many places adopted the box-toed boot with sensible heels, and the California saddle was taking the place of all others. This was an extremely heavy saddle, with a small horn but very strong and the most comfortable saddle to be found for steady use, and as a rule, the easiest one on a horse.

There was another saddle, a Texas production, closely allied to the Bucharia, but not so heavy, that was, and is to this day, a very popular saddle. The slicker and tarpaulin were two of the most valuable accessions to the cow-man's outfit that ever came into the business. They were made of good cotton stuff, and a preparation of linseed oil filled every pore so completely that they were as thoroughly waterproof as a shingle roof, and became the cow-boy's right bower.

A cow-boy's outfit is never complete except he has a good supply of hopples on hand. After sea-grass ropes became so plentiful and cheap, the good old rawhide hopples and platted lariettes were relegated to the rear, and if the cow-pony could talk, unless he was a good, religious pony, he would curse the day when sea-grass hopples were introduced. His feelings toward the inventor of that article would be something like those of the native toward the barbed-wire manufacturer, for the poor little fellows sometimes wore a very sore pair of legs by the use of the strand of a rope for a hopple.

There has been much said about pack-ponies, and that method of working a range, by taking the grub on



Typical Cow Camp.—The horse to the right belongs to a nester, (the author.) (See page 82.)

a pack. Some very amusing things will occur with the pack. I remember once, while driving through Waco, the pack-pony became a little unruly, and was running up and down street after street, when the pack slipped and turned under. This put the little gentleman to kicking. The result was that flour, bacon, beans, tin-cups and plates, coffee-pot, sugar, onions and bedding were strewn over about five acres of ground. Some of the boys suggested that we hire the ground broke and harrowed before it rained and thus secure a good crop of grub.

The pack-pony was very handy, but the greatest trouble of any one thing in the outfit, and it was the most cruel thing imaginable to fasten the pack on so as to make it secure, even with a saddle, and fasten it well, let the pony or donkey, as the case might be, run into a pond of water and get the ropes wet; it was terrible on him. When an outfit had to resort to a pack, they usually hired their bread made, or made it sometimes, when they couldn't find a woman, not infrequently making it up in the mouth of the sack, and if they had no skillet would either fry it or cook it hoe-cake fashion; but I have seen it cooked by rolling the dough round a stick and holding it over the fire, turning it until cooked.

The change in the styles of saddles brought the change, also, in the stirrup. Since '78, and the introduction of the California saddle, the narrow stirrup has been used, and has been found to be the most comfortable. The change in position of the legs, too, accompanied this change in the fashion. The foot is thrust through the stirrup until the stirrup rests in the hollow of the foot, or the foot rests thus in the stirrup, just as you like, and when the rider sits in his saddle the straps are lengthened so as to let him rest his weight just comfortably in the stirrup, while at the same time he is not removed from the saddle-seat.

It has been fully demonstrated that the man who rides thus, and sits straight on his horse, is capable of riding farther, and with less fatigue to himself and horse, than one who is all the time changing.

The methods of handling cattle change as well as the paraphernalia. I remember it was a rare thing ever to see a man branding cattle on horseback. If they did, they usually threw the rope on the animal's head, and then tied them to a tree and heeled them, or threw the rope round their hind legs and simply stretched them out. In branding yearlings or calves on the range, they would make a run, toss the tug on the animal; one man would hold while another would dismount, catch it by the tail, jerk it down, draw its tail between its hind legs, place his knee against its back while it would be lying on its side, and thus hold it while the first man would brand and mark it. In the way described above, one man could hold the largest animal on the range, if he understood his business. Range-branding was a very popular method of branding mavericks. The necessary outfit usually was a sharp knife, a straight bar and half circle ;the ring end of a wagon-rod, or common iron rings, were good. In the case of using rings, one needed a pair of pincers. However, one used to such work, could very success-fully run a brand with them by using a couple of sticks, with which to hold them.

For many years, however, the custom was to drive the cattle to some pen, many of which were located over each range, and then brand up all those that belonged to any one in the outfit, or those they knew, and sometimes a miracle would be performed by branding all those left in the brand of the cows they followed, and if any were left whose owner was not known, and was too old to claim a mother, they were—well, I can't exatly say, as I was not always by, but usually those whose mothers were strays were turned out and left to run until they were too old to be known. In after years] they were usually dealt with differently.

The style changed to catching cattle as well as horses by the front feet or fore feet, as we called them, which was a much better method of throwing them.

The horse when roped by the head if wild, will choke himself down and the best method of holding him when once down is to take him by the ear with one hand, nose with the other. To illustrate, if the horse falls on his left side you want to take hold of his ear with your right hand and nose with the left hand, raising it until his mouth is at an angle of forty, five degrees, placing one knee on his neck near his head. In this way a small man can hold a large horse on the ground.

The difference in holding a horse and cow down is that you must hold the horse's front legs or head on the ground because he never gets up behind first but throws his front feet out and then gets up; the cow on the contrary gets up directly the reverse, gets up on her hind feet first, therefore you must hold her down by the tail. The horse is easily choked down but it is almost an impossibility to choke a cow down. It is a noted fact that a colt that is handled when sucking, being staked and becoming used to a rope between the time he is two months and a year old, is never very wild. He may be hard to drive when allowed to run with wild horses but when once in hand is easily managed. The cow on the other hand may be raised perfectly gentle and if allowed to run out and become wild, may become the most vicious of any other.

Speaking of the method of holding cattle and horses down calls to mind a little incident that came under my observation. A cattleman employed a Swede who was a very stout fellow, he was as willing as he was green, and was green enough to make up for all his other virtues. This cattleman was not over-sensitive about what another had to perform. One day they roped a wild horse of good size and when they had choked him until he fell to the ground, the cow-man called to the Swede "Jump on his head," meaning, of course, for him to catch the horse as before described but instead of that the ignorant fellow jumped right astride the horse's head and the rope being slacked the horse made a lunge and threw the poor fellow his length on the ground and ran over him. It seemed a miracle if he came out alive but he only received a few bruises.

At another time when handling a bad cow, the same parties engaged, the cow made a run at the Swede when his boss called to him to catch her by the horns which he did and the cow simply lifted him a double somersault over her back. He eventually got tired and quit the cattle business, went to farming and, as a good story book would say, "did well and lived happy ever afterward."

Those who think the cow-boy is not stylish simply let them hunt him up, study his character, note his fancy and while it is true that like poor Yorick of old he is "a fellow of infinite jest, of most peculiar fancy," still he is stylish after a fashion of his own.

To say that any law of fashion does or could wield an influence over him, I think, would be a mistake. I don't think one could be induced to wear a plug hat. If he did at all it would be for the novelty of the thing. If you see him in New York or Chicago you see him wearing the same sort of a hat and boots he wears at home.

He is looked upon by some as a law breaker. It is true in some cases, but is it not equally true of all classes? I maintain that it is not more universal with this than any other class of men in any one vocation of life. It may be a little more out-breaking but of the same kind. His wild free range and constant association with nature and natural things makes him more sensitive to restraint than he otherwise would be. Under the influences of a free wild life he has grown to be self-reliant and like Davie Crocket, "he asks no favors and shuns no responsibilities;" he, however, measures his responsibilities by a rule of his own construction which is oftener the outgrowth of personal inclination than a well balanced consciousness of moral responsibility, like his brother of more favorable surroundings who is prone to reject the moral teachings of God's word and fall back for a refuge to the unreliable guidance of conscience; when this moral guide has been so educated as to be like the material of which he makes his hopples which, by a little dampening and working becomes pliable, has a tendency to stretch and thus meet the demands of its environments.

The cow-boy's outfit of clothing, as a rule, is of the very best from hat to boots, he may not have a dollar in the world, but he will wear good, substantial clothing, even if he has to buy it on a credit, and he usually has plenty of that, that is good. I once heard a minister in a little Northern town, in using the cow-boy as an illustration, say "The cow-boy with an eighteen dollar hat and a two dollar suit of clothing is as happy as a king on his throne," or words to that effect.

With those who knew no better the illustration perhaps held good, but to a crowd of the boys it would have been very ridiculous and amusing. In fact extravagance is one of the cow-boy's failings. The inventory of his wardrobe could be very correctly summed up as follows: Hat, five to ten dollars; pants, five to ten dollars; coat and vest, from eight to twenty dollars; overshirt, from three to five dollars, and everything else to match. They may be cheated in buying, but are never beat by the same man the second time, they at least think they are getting the best, and always make the best of their bargain.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FREE GRASS AND PASTURE MEN.

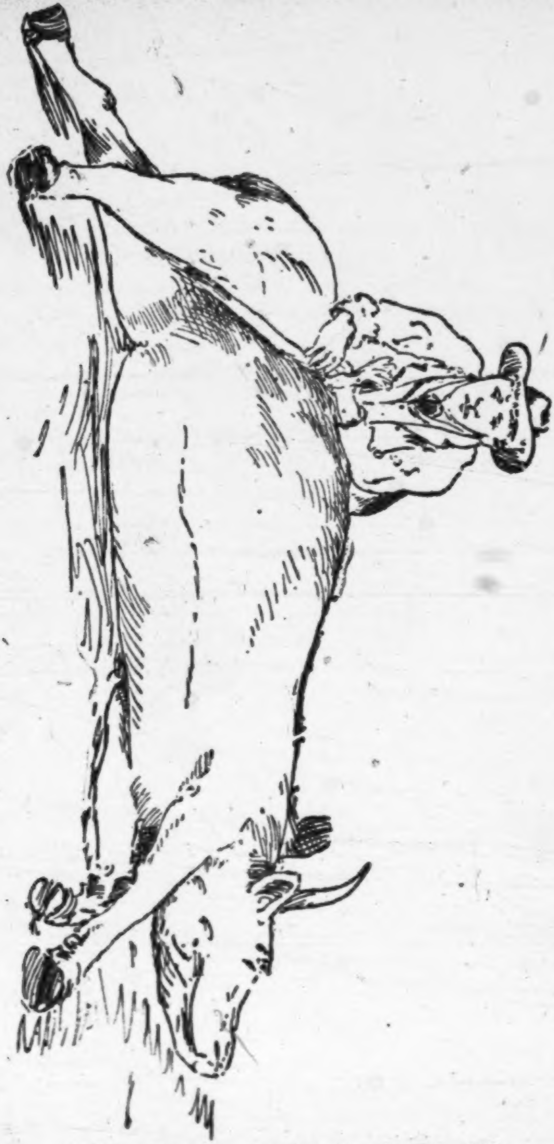
The days of free grass are gone. If you wish to arouse recollections of by-gones that will make the old timer in the cattle business heave a sigh of regret, just mention the good old days of free range when the grass was as free as the air they breathed and when the "Wo hau come" of the horny handed son of the granger was never heard in the sacred precincts of the land of free grass and water.

The man who came to Texas when the wild cayote and the lion of the tribe of Mexico were his most intimate neighbors, when the hiss of the rattle-snake and the unearthly yell of the panther were by far the most familiar sounds to his ear, and after years of toil and scratching shins, breaking the briers mixed with fighting the blood-thirsty savage thief, the red child of the desert, is it strange that he should think it an infringement on his natural rights for people to come in and begin to plow up the land, thus limiting his cattle range? He had enjoyed this unalloyed bliss of living "monarch of all he surveyed" so long that he felt almost as though it was his by the statute of limitation.

There was never any contention worth naming among the cattle men. It is true they didn't wish to be crowded. In illustration of their ideas of what that meant I recite a little incident in connection with one of the old residenters. He lived out perhaps a hundred miles from our little country town and seventyfive miles from the nearest trading point except the government post. While down in the settlement with his teams after bread my grandfather asked him how he was getting on. "Very well, very well, thank you, Bill. I've got to move, though." "Why?" said grandfather. "O, because they are crowding me out there, the nesters are settling all 'round me and I will not be crowded. One of the impudent varmints has settled right down in my back yard."

Upon closer inquiry we found the location of the obnoxious nester referred to, to be twenty-eight miles below him on the opposite side of the river. Of course, it was more of a jest than earnest; the real fact, however, is there were none who enjoyed the presence of the nester, he was held in somewhat the same contempt that a physician of the old school looks upon patent medicine men, or a sheep-man would a wolf.

The cattlemen looked upon the country as being fit for nothing but pasture and the man that presumed to squat down and attempt to dig his living out of the ground by the sweat of his brow as being in very small business. In fact they went on the principle that they had put no grubs in the ground and didn't propose to take any out and, as I once heard a cow man say, that "God had discriminated in favor of the stock man when he had respect unto Abel in his offering and despised the offering of Cain, consequently the cattleman had a right to the range." This gentleman reminds one very much of the theologians of to-day who simply construe God's word to mean that which meets the demands of their own inclina-



Holding Cow down by the tail. (See Page 98.)

tion. This is clearly proven by their antagonism of the sheep-man a few years later. Of all the despicable characters to the cattlemen it was the sheep-man. They then quoted the passage portraying the churlishness of Nabal, the son of folly, and fain would assume the character of an insulted and outraged David and further would have wiped him off the face of the earth with all his coolies but for the reconciling influences of "Abigal," though not so graciously polite as the Abigal of old, yet quite as effective, the great strong arm of the law.

One discrimination this modern Abigal made, however, and that was the sheep-man must keep his stock on his own land while the "King of the Kow" was allowed to turn his cattle loose to roam at will. As there is not an event in history without its forerunner or prophecy so the coming of the sheep-man and the attending results was a prophecy of the eventual downfall of the reign of free grass, and if one will stop and think for a moment, as some men did think, it was an inevitable result, the discrimination against the sheep-man in favor of the cow-puncher was enough to bring it about.

The snoozer was not allowed to herd or turn his sheep loose on the range that he didn't own. The cow-man could with impunity locate on the line of the sheep-man's range, though the snoozer owned his miles of range, the cattle of a dozen ranches were allowed to roam at will on his land. This would naturally drive him to fence. Other sheep-men seeing the prosperity of one would come in and buy up large tracts of land and say to Mr. cow-puncher "move your ranch;" then he "had to," and in order to protect himself he was forced to buy or lease and fence. So the ball began to roll and accumulate until the trouble precipitated between the pasture men and the free grass fellows.

The wealthier class, of course, could buy up larger tracts and lease more land than the little fellow, and when it once began to be a fixed rule for each man to get all he could and keep all he had, the demon of avarice that goes to make up the leaven of so many of our lives, stepped in as the initiator of schemes for swindling and prompted many men to buy up and lease land on all sides of large bodies of individual property that was not likely for years to be molested, fence all together and thus utilize thousands of acres of land that they had no right to.

This had the natural tendency to bring out all the rough points of antagonism in the little fellow, who was thus cheated out of what he conceived to be his legitimate heritage, and the consequence was that he bought a pair of nippers and went to cutting or hired some enterprising fellow to do it for him.

There was at one time a law passed in favor of the cattleman, allowing one man to take up seven sections of State school land on certain conditions, giving a certain time in which to pay it out. A cattleman of means would take up seven sections and then have as many of his hands as he wished to take seven sections each, and thus enable one man to control whole counties. This brought about a state of affairs that culminated in the repeal of that law and the passage of a new one allowing but one section to each man and opening all land to actual settlers, not leased or legitimately held by former claimants; this resulted in a more relentless war between the big pasture men and the squatter, or the man with the hoe, than had ever been waged between any two classes in the state, making litigation almost endless and causing the larger cattle owners to combine, forming cattle companies and syndicates sufficiently powerful to crush out of existence the smaller frey.

The advent of barbed wire into Texas brought with it a reign of lawlessness and terror, such as has no parallel in the State's eventful history.

Then there were decidedly two classes, free grass and pasture men, and never in any land has there been greater bitterness and eternal hatred than existed between those two factions. It was to be heard on the range, at home 'round the fireside, in the courts, in the legislative halls, every election was carried or lost on this issue, the best men of the country were on one or the other side of this question. If a man was a pasture man, he was favoring the wealthy, if a free grass man, he was branded as a wire cutter, when in reality neither charge was necessarily true. It is useless for me to enter into the arguments on the two sides of this question as it has been thoroughly "cussed and discussed" by writers better qualified than I am to do the subject justice, besides it is not my object to deal in theory but facts, and this I shall do as far as in me lies.

From my knowledge of the true state of affairs wire-cutting was merely another or new form of mob law; the beginning of such work was, to some who never stopped to reason, a justifiable act of self-defense, but to a thinking man lawlessness is never justifiable.

An outraged community unable to bring to justice a known criminal, takes the law into its own hands and meets out to the offender summary punishment; they argue that "this is the only way to deal with him" never looking to their own crime. If a man is hanged without a trial, the perpetrators in the eyes of the law are murderers and instead of lessening crime they have increased the criminal class. A man fenced up land he had no legal right to, he was criminal; his neighbhors band together and cut his fence and there are more criminals.

The first thing that especially aroused the indignation of the stock-man relative to barbed wire was the terrible destruction to stock caused from being torn first on the wire, and the screw worm doing the rest—this was especially the case with horses. When the first fences were made, the cattle never having had experience with it, would run full till right into it and many of them got badly hurt, and when one got a scratch sufficient to draw the blood, the worms would take hold of it. Some man would come into a range, where the stock had regular rounds or beaten ways, and fence up several hundred acres right across the range and thus endanger thousands of cattle and horses. After the first three years of wire fences, I have seen horses and cattle that you could hardly drive between two posts, and if there was a line of posts running across the prairie, I have seen a bunch of range horses follow the line out to the end and then turn, but in a few years the old tough hided cow found a way to crawl through into a cornfield if the wire was not well stretched and the posts close together. The man who had horses cut up and killed by the wire, often felt like cutting it down all of it, and in many instances did; but like every other class of lawlessness it ran to extremes and before it had gotten very far, was taken up by the more vicious, and such a time one would hardly dream of, who has never had the misfortune to witness it. It became so common that whole pastures would fall in one night and it made no difference who owned them, the presence of the dread enemy was sufficient evidence, and down she came. The men who cut the wire with a very few exceptions were men who owned but few if any horses or cattle; many of them owned nothing at all, they came out to find room and grass and that class was the most rabid of all others.

I once met one of those fellows, who was working a little East Texas dogy stag and a little bull to an old human wagon (wood axle). He had seven dogs, nine children, a wife, a cob pipe and a roll of home-spun tobacco stuck down in his hip pocket. I mean the tobacco was in his pocket—not the family. I asked him where he was from: "I am from Arkansaw, Whoa Bully." "Where are you going?" "Going West to find grass and room. Ike-lep." He was a regular copperas-breeches and one-gallus sort of a character; had just as soon live as to die; fight one man as two, and would spend more time twisting a rabbit out of a hollow tree than he would to secure a shelter for his family in time of a storm. He could afford to have one or two children blown away, but rabbits were too scarce to take the chances on losing one.

There would seem to be some excuse for the man who had stock injured by the wire, but for the man who had nothing on earth to lose or gain, who just did it from pure unadulterated cussedness, there can be no mitigation of his crime. Doubtless many good men for the lack of better judgment on the impulse of the moment, when they came face to face with the evidence of their loss, were led to cut fences, but the cutting of fences made them no better citizens, but had the direct tendency to lead them into other evils. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." One starts out down the stream of wrongdoing, and soon he finds its water growing deeper, the cause being that every little rivulet of evil wends it way on downward to the River of Crime and the man who once allows himself launched upon this dangerous stream is too apt to drift with the tide of evil, until at last he is disrobed of his power to battle with the awful current, and is helplessly swept out into the whirlpool of ruin, irretrievably sinking at last into the ocean of eternity, where he receives his wages, for "The wages of sin is death."

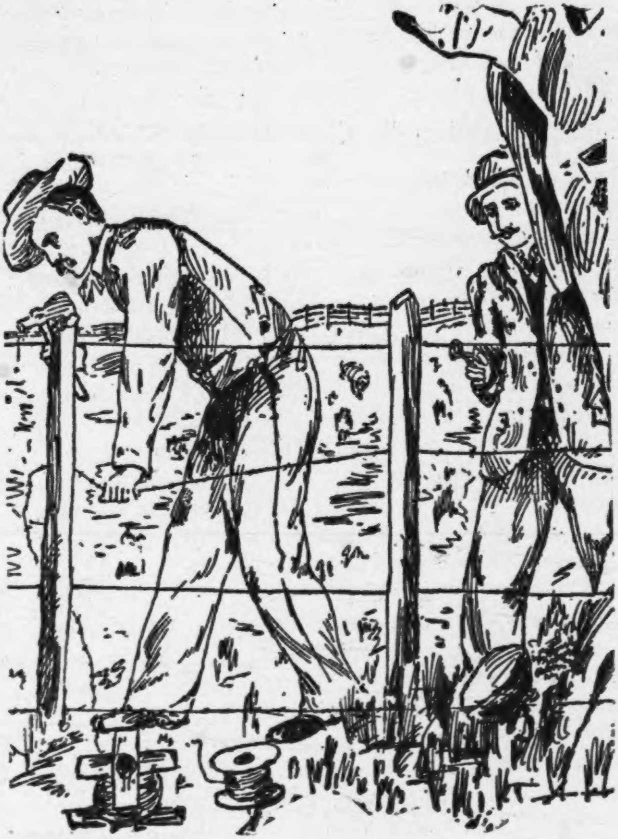
The legislature eventually made it a felony to cut a fence, with punishment at "State Contract." Many men, both good and bad, lost their lives in the conflict and a bitterness engendered of neighbor against neighbor that will tend to chill the blood of good citizenship for years to come. Free grass has gone and nothing to show for its usefulness but the fact that the country was opened and the way made possible for our present development and growth, by men who had iron nerve and will to brave the difficulties of a frontier life, all for the benefits offered by free range, and that, that was good.

Suffice it to say that the old fellows who came, saw and conquered, were not the wire cutters, and, to their credit be it said, almost to a man they condemned it. I mean the older settlers, those men who came in the early days and carved out of the wilderness a home for themselves. Many of the dear old "diamonds in the rough" have gone to answer the summons of the great pioneer of the universe and those who are still with us and witnessing the advancement of civilization as a rule are not appropriating to themselves the credit due them for the patient toil and hardships that have given to many a poor man a home in the land of milk and honey, and very few of those who are enjoying the fruits of their labors properly appreciate their real worth, plodding along as they do, their chief occupation gone, often looking as they do with an eye of longing toward the setting sun that so often in early life marked the course of their journey, taking delight in nothing now so much as the privilege of recounting their experiences of more exciting times.

But some day the eye that was so keen to discover the presence of his inveterate foe, the red man, and draw so fine a bead along the barrel of an old "Human rifle" as to make it extremely unhealthy for the varmint or game that came within the range of his trusty piece, that eye will look for the last time upon the accoutrements that were once his trusty companions in the times that tried men's hearts, and then the soul will take its place in the phantom bark that will bear it across the River of Death to the "better shores of the spiritland," where there will be no more heartaches, no more Indians to encounter in deadly strife, no more wild beasts to trouble the peacefulness of that home of delight, no more struggles between free grass advocates and pasture men.

Nearly all of the old frontiersmen of my knowledge are soldiers of King Emanuel, many of those who took part in the struggles recorded in this chapter have since laid down the sword and taken up the cross, many of the thoughtless youths who were led into lawlessness are now living in a way that bids fair to render them useful. Let us hope that the gospel of peace will yet reach many more who are yet on the "broad trail," may be as a pointer to the herd, may be as a common hustler keeping up the drags yet on the "broad trail" that leads to eternal condemnation, for "Wide is the gate and broad the way that leads to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat."

Yes, the great free grass struggles are over, the people have as a rule buried the tomahawk. Barbed wire, like the Johnson grass, came to stay, and the people of Texas have decided to make it a blessing instead of wrestling with it. It is bad medicine when a fellow fools with it, and no sadder plight can be



Pasture Man. Wire Cutter

(See page 106.)

imagined than one in which a man is described as being between a mad Texas steer and a good wire fence the only thing possible for him to do is to drop to the ground and roll under, leaving the steer to interview the fence.

The experience of the free grass men wrestling with barbed wire reminds me of a story told on an old frontiersman which occurred in an early day. He lived out on the Colorado river not far from the mouth of the Concho. While out hunting one day with one or two of his boys, they became separated and were on opposite sides of the creek, the water hole, unfortunately, was swimming for some distance up and down from where they were, the old gentleman discovered a young wildcat, and it being small, he decided to take it prisoner, so he caught it, but it was large enough to make him regret the rash act, so he decided to turn the thing loose, but when he pulled its fore feet loose, it would catch him with its hind feet, it was simply making sausage meat of him, when he called for help. His boy ran down to the bank opposite to where he was and being unable to reach him called out to know what the trouble was. "I have caught a wildcat and it is tearing me all to pieces," said the father. "Turn it loose," said the boy. "Turn it loose? that is just what I have been trying to do," said the father, "but I can't turn it loose." So with the wire cutter, he caught a wildcat and could not turn it loose.

I shall never forget the first wire fence I ever saw. I took a trip to Fannin county with my grand father to buy some cow horses. While passing through Tarrant county we stopped near his old ranch on Deer Creek to see about some stock horses of his that ranged near the old place. While there, I saw a horse that had been cut across the knee, and we were told that the wire fence we had just passed was the cause. When I saw a barbed-wire machine at work manufacturing it and was told that there were thousands of them at the same work, I went home and told the boys they might just as well put up their cutters and quit splitting rails and use barbed-wire instead. I was as confident then as I am to-day that wire would win and just as confident when we landed the first train-load of cattle at Fort Worth, Texas, that between wire and railroads the cow-boy's days were numbered, as I am that he is now almost a thing of the past.

CHAPTER IX.

MODERN CATTLE STEALING AS A SCIENCE.

We live in a day of advancement. Hardly anything that can be mentioned that has not been improved or at least had the earnest thought of the inventive crank. Inventors are so numerous that it might be said their name is legion. It has been said that a crank is something that turns, and but for cranks the world would stand still. One has said that one of the characteristics of a crank is that it turns in the same place all the time, and by another that if it does turn in one place it gets out of the old rut and describes a larger circle than does the shaft it turns. But I have seen adjustable cranks by means of which one might describe quite a variety of circles and they were very useful. There is one fact beyond controversy and that is we have cranks. And about as great a nuisance as we have in the way of a crank is the man who gets cranky and is always harping about cranks. You may not think this sticking to the subject, but you will see by and by. The question might be asked, "Why do you write about stealing? People know enough already about stealing." I have a reason and I trust to be able to make it plain, and if I do not, then my indulgent reader will have to go through life enjoying the bliss of ignorance. It is an old and a very true saying that it takes a thief to catch a thief, that is equivalent to saying that to detect a man in crime one must be familiar with the crime. Can it not be equally true in trying to lead erring men to a better life. You must first, as far as in you lies, know their peculiar needs? If you are to be brought to sympathize with a man in trouble you must, in a measure, be able to place yourself in his condition, at least acquaint yourself with his peculiar suffering and temptation. The great difficulty in the way of the usefulness of many ministers of to-day is that they are wrestling with problems and questions with which they are almost wholly unacquainted. In order to be able to reach the cattlemen with the Gospel, the worker must familiarize himself with his manners and customs, and the heading of this chapter is one of the customs of some of them. What? Stealing a custom? Yes, stealing is a custom. Why should such a statement as this seem strange? Is lying not a custom of some merchants? Is scientific swindling any part of the life of any of our great land agencies, mining corporations, town-site companies, grocery men, dry goods men, the great packing companies or canning companies? Do any of our little truck farmers ever put the little "taters" in the bottom of the barrel, the best wood on top of the load? If they do, what is it but scientific swindling? Yes, some cattlemen get stealing down to a science and they are just as good and not any better than your thieving merchant, farmer, miner, real estate dealer or swindling trader in anything else. Theft and robbery are one and the same wherever you meet them, and the only thing that makes the difference is, that the penalty is not the same. One Irishman stole a horse and was on the way to the penitentiary, another learned what he was going for and said, "You are a fool. Why didn't you do as I, buy him on credit and never pay for him?" The difference is, one steals while you sleep and the other takes advantage of your confidence and robs you according to law. The crime is not quite the same. One is theft, the other unadulterated cussedness. Christian people make great efforts to save a drunkard, and it is right, but let us study how to indiscriminately reach all classes.

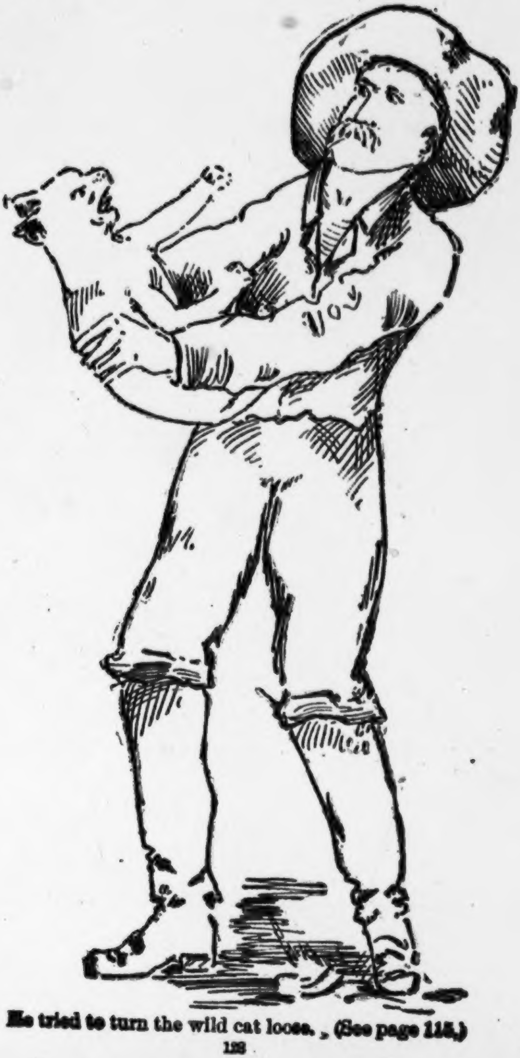
The inventive geniuses very naturally run into the cattle business, as in all else. Men became perfect horsemen, perfect hands with a rope, and I can truly say I believe they got the question of "pulling" cattle down to about as fine a point as I ever knew anything brought. Some one might wish to know where I got my information, and for the special instruction of such, if there should be one so curious, I would suggest that if any one else should ask the question, just say that you don't know. The many names given stealing are such as to make it almost respectable. For instance, instead of stealing a bunch of cattle, he would get away with them, got off with them, or pulled them; and if any two men were engaged in a special job, they stood in; if they were very successful, they made a good haul. If anything came into the range that was known to be total stray, or from a far distant range, it was good truck; a stray, unbranded horse was a slick; one that was not thought to be fully safe to handle, was simply held by some little brand or mark, so that no one else would bother it, and while waiting developments, it was "a sleeper." If there was no racket raised about it and everything moved smoothly, it was bought, and a bill of sale, witnessed all in good legal form, could be produced at any time it was needed, provided the animal was not shoved out of the range.

The word "handle" and "rustle" were two favorite names for stealing. A little circumstance occurred in our range that will illustrate what I am trying to tell. Several cattlemen rode up to the house of a nester one day and one of the boys was engaged in conversation with the nester's wife, when she said to him (we will call him Andrews): "Mr. Andrews, what would you think if I told you that we haven't had a bite of meat in our house for more than a week?" "Why, Mrs. Clay (that name will do), why don't your husband go to rustling?" She replied: "This thing called rustling is only another name for stealing, and I will let you know my old man is above that." "So was I," said Andrews, "until I came near starving to death, and I learned to rustle."

At one time when an old nester had lost a bunch of nice hogs and was looking for them, he called at a ranch on his rounds and took dinner. He was very kindly treated but no one had seen his hogs. After he had departed some of the boys, among the rest the proprietor of the ranch, enjoyed a hearty laugh at the nester's expense. The joke was that the fellow had eaten some of his own hogs for dinner. There were some little boys standing round but the father never dreamed that they had taken notice of the conversation. In a few days the fellow came by again and stopped for dinner, and, while they were engaged in conversation, one of the little fellows walked up to the squatter and said, "I know a good joke on you." The fellow said "What is it?" "When you was here the other day hunting for your hogs you was eating some of them for your dinner." The cattleman burst out in a hearty laugh, and said to the boy: "You trifling rascal, you will just about have your daddy hung one of these days. Don't you know you mustn't give your daddy away?" And so turned it that the fellow took it as a good joke.

The laws of Texas require that every man that had a mark and brand should put he same on record. No two men were allowed to have the same mark and brand recorded except as a partnership mark and brand. Some men had more than one brand, but they were recorded in the brand records of the county in different names. For instance, a man had ten children and one wife, he could record twelve different marks and brands. Many men had the same mark and different brands, and many had the same brands and different marks, and many had the same marks and brands but lived in different counties. There may be people in the world who don't know what a mark and brand is. I have heard people in St. Louis, Kansas City and Chicago, where thousands of cattle are slaughtered every year, talk about a cow being marked with the letter B, or some other letter or figure. One young lady was telling me about her brother's mark, and when she showed it on paper it was A-X-T-L. This young lady said she had spent five months on the ranch and had been on several roundups, and still she claimed her brother's mark was A-X-T-L but couldn't tell what the brand was. I don't suppose her observation of cattle had been very close, as she seemed to know more in one minute about a young cow-man she met while there than anything else, and I have an idea she didn't care anything about marks and brands. The boys seldom take much pains to teach the young ladies who come from the States more than one lesson at a time, and that is how to love the cow-man. Sometimes they succeed; again they make hopeless failures. No, we don't mark cattle with A-X-T-L, or B or N B, or any letter or figure, but with a red-hot iron we burn those letters, or whatever brand we wish, into the hide of the poor, bawling animal and call it a brand, and we cut some sort of slice out of their ears, and that is called marking them. The names given marks are crop, split, underbit, overbit, under and over hack, under and over half-crop, steeple-fork, grub, under and over slope and swallow-fork. Now these different cuts in the ear are capable of many combinations. To illustrate, one may mark with swallow-fork and underbit the right and over half-crop the left, or crop the right and under-slope the left, or under-slope each ear or over and under slope the right, which is called a sharp, and crop and swallow-fork the left, or underbit the left and overbit the right, and I could take up one hundred pages with the marks I was familiar with and never name the same one twice.

This, then, was marking and branding, which was accomplished with a good, keen knife, and a red-hot iron.



He tried to turn the wild cat loose. (See page 115.)

In some instances, in the absence of an iron, the burning end of a stick was used, but made a poor brand. Some instances have been known where the brand was cut in the hide with a knife but this method was universally condemned and I am not certain but think there was a law prohibiting it. Some men, however, had very little respect for law; looked upon it very much as an anarchist, an infringement upon their natural rights. I am glad to say, however, that very few of the cow-men had such feelings in regard to the law. They might violate it knowingly but they never claimed it as a right, but among themselves called it by its right name. Stealing, for instance, was designated as theft. One "rustler" in speaking of another would designate him as an awful thief, a grand rascal, a renegade from justice, and declare that if he had his dues he would be in the pen or hung twenty years ago.

A crop meant cutting about half the ear off smoothly, straight from the upper side; a half-crop, either upper or lower, was to split the ear from the tip, midway, about half way back toward the head, and cut off either half. If the upper half was cut off, it was over or upper half-crop. If the lower half, it was under half-crop. A split was simply to split the ear as above described and leave it thus. Underbit or overbit was to double the ear in and cut a small piece, perhaps an inch, out of either the upper or lower side, an inch in length and perhaps one-third that in depth. Under and over hack was simply to cut either up on the under side, or down from the upper side of the ear, perhaps half an inch; steeple-fork was to cut two splits into the ear from the end, back one third or half way toward the head, and cut out the middle piece, the splits to be an inch apart or thereabouts; an over or under slope was to cut the ear from about two thirds of the way back from the tip, above or below, straight to the center of the ear at the tip; an upper and under slope you may readily see would make a sharp, by giving the ear point. A swallow-fork was to fold the ear lengthwise, begin half way back, cut at an angle of forty-five degrees toward the end; the result was a forked notch in the ear, called a swallow-fork. A grub was by far the most cruel mark of any, as it was to cut the ear off smooth to the head. None but very hard men ever used this mark, they had to be very much of the nature of the savage to be so cruel. But you can take the most refined man or woman and by constant association with bloody deeds they will become case-hardened, will become accustomed to suffering in animals until suffering does not affect them. I have been told that there is a law in England that prohibits a butcher from serving as a juror. Whether this is true or not, it would be a wise provision in any land. Men become hardened to such an extent that they have not the sensibility of that "touch of nature that makes all the world akin."

We now return to the subject: One of the methods of scientific cattle stealing, though not a very universal one, as the opportunity was rare. (I don't know of a personal knowledge that this was ever practiced, but am willing to vouch for it, as I had it from one who knew.)

A cow-man, in making a large delivery, say of four or five thousand cattle, they were run into a corral in bunches of say two hundred and fifty for road-branding, a brand that would designate them as the property of the purchaser, and if he happened to be a man unused to the cattle business, as many were, they would brand all in the pen and then count them out and run in another bunch, they would make it in the way to run in, close to time to quit for the day, a greater number than they could brand, and brand only part of them, leaving a mixed bunch in the pen over night During the night they would steal out and drive in twenty or thirty head of those that were already branded and counted, putting them in the pen with the mixed bunch, finish up next morning and count them out again, thus making a clear steal of all they could run in during the night. They would keep this up until they had finished branding, when, perhaps, they had recounted two or three hundred cattle. This was called slick work. I have an idea, however, that very scrupulously conscientious people would call it stealing by wholesale. That is really the proper name for it.

Sometimes men would find in cutting trail herds, that the trailer had stray cattle, and when the rustler thought he could afford it, he cut every stray he found, run it out in his own range, put it "to sleep," and after a time used it. He did not always make sleepers of them, as he could sometimes dispose of them at once, for there were many buyers who bought at a whack up and asked no questions.

The rustlers in some localities elected their own officers and then they had a walk over. If they had the inspector they were all right. I know of one bunch of cattle that were inspected and passed by the County Inspector, the affidavit signed and sealed when he had not been within twenty miles of the herd. There was very little science about that. It was simply unadulterated gall, even for a thieving officer. If he had any conscience, it was all stretched out. Yet he was as good as the men he worked for, or the one that drove the cattle.

In the classification of cattlemen, in another place, we referred to number two as a man whose conscience was rather flexible, and casually referred to his practice of sometimes slipping another man's head in the halter of justice, disguised as his own; he had a fine line of logic for his course. It reminds one of the drunken man whose hat was in the gutter. While swinging to a lamp-post he soliloquized thus: "If I try to get you out, I will fall in myself, and if I fall in, you can't help me out worth a cent; so good-bye old fel." Number two as a rule, was a man who had money and influence, at least, if he had money he had the other, number three had neither; if number two got in, number three could not help him out worth a cent; but if number three got in, number two could help him out, so he argued that it was policy to keep one gentleman in the outfit, and when a number three got into it, number two would usually help him, always observing the time honored principle, "self-preservation is the first law of nature."

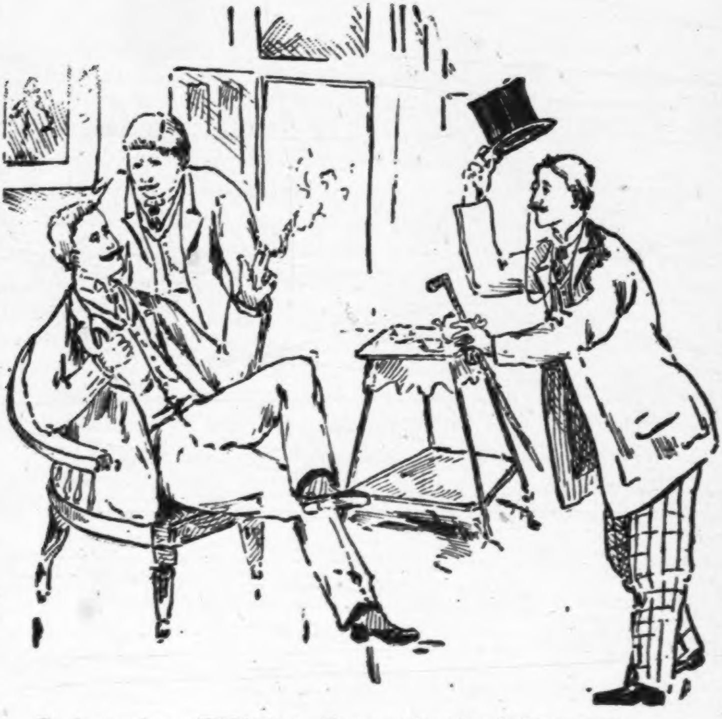
CHAPTER X.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A COW-BOY.

The peculiar characteristics of a cow-boy are as varied as the pictures in the kaleidoscope—as often as you turn him you notice some new combination, and frequently not only new to the observer but new to the subject himself; like, as has been said of Napoleon Bonaparte, "the wildest theories took the color of his whim." He is so peculiarly odd sometimes as to be a study to the curiosity hunter. I have seen him standing quietly smoking a cigarette at the depot, maybe not thinking of taking a train at all. The train would pull in, and maybe when the conductor would call out "All aboard," he would make a dash for the train, just catch it and wave a good-bye and he was gone. He sometimes does odd things just for the amusement of bystanders, and makes himself very ridiculous to those who don't know him. I saw one standing forty or fifty yards away from the train one day. Just before it pulled out he asked an old gentleman how far the train went that night, and he was told that it kept going all night. "Is that so? Well I must catch it," said he. "You had better hurry up if you are going on that train," said a bystander who was on to his game. So he started just as the engineer pulled out; he ran just like he intended to go, calling out: "Wait till I get on," and running at the top of his speed until, within a few feet of the train, which was going real slow, he purposely stubbed his toe and went rolling down the dump, got up and began to shake his fist at the train, and make a terrible show of anger; came on back and said that any town that would let a train run off from a man in such a way he would shake the dust of his brogans off as a testimony against it. And stamping very severely, he mounted his pony, put spurs to him and was gone. To the people who knew nothing of the real intention it was a novel thing.

Many of the boys fall into the habit of gambling, and during the winter months, while "rusticating in town," they will engage in that sort of a thing, but as a rule he is a hard character to get anything out of before a Grand Jury. One instance will suffice to illustrate the point. One young fellow, who it was known had been gambling, was summoned to appear before the Grand Jury. When the bailiff served the summons the young fellow said: "Well, take me." The officer took hold of him but he simply fell to the floor. By calling some help he was carried bodily before the "august" body and laid in a heap on the floor. The foreman proceeded to question him concerning his knowledge of gambling in the town, but all the answer he got was "Oh, Kerwhacky!" They finally took him before the judge and that was all the information he could get, so he sent him to jail, where he was kept for some time. They eventually became so disgusted they released him, but there was never any testimony given by him, and I candidly believe he would have lain in jail ten years before he would have given any of the boys away.

If he is beaten at his own game it is novel to



Good morning "KERNEL."—He has stolen himself into respectability and is promoted.

see how philosophically he takes it. There was a new way introduced of asking for anything at the table. Instead of asking for it he would say: "Move the bread, please," or "Move the meat," or "move" anything he desired. Especially handy with this was one young fellow, and while out on the run with another of the boys, they stopped at a hotel to get breakfast. His companion posted the waiter, and by giving him a quarter got him to agree that when the other called for bread or anything else in that way he would, as though he had misunderstood, simply move it to the other end of the table. By and by he called to the waiter and said, so that every one around the table could hear, "Move the bread, please." The waiter picked up the bread and moved it to the farthest end of the table, when, seeming as if not the least bit put out, our friend said, "Thank you," and went on eating. However, I don't remember having heard him ask another servant to "move the bread."

Many of them are fond of practical jokes. If they find a man to be timid on any point, that is the thing they especially press, sometimes to unreasonable extremes. I remember one young fellow who came to us was very much afraid that he would meet a panther. As soon as it was known every one knew of some very bloody conflict between man and panther, in which many good men had gone down; and when night came they would sit 'round the flickering campfire and tell stories concerning panthers and Mexican lions until the poor fellow would be so frightened that they would have to let him make his pallet between two others. One night one of the boys, who could imitate the panther, came into camp rather later than usual, and as he came singing along, within a hundred yards or so he hushed singing, fired off his pistol, squalled like a panther and then began to hollo murder, at the same time dismounting and striking his horse, making him run into camp riderless, while he kept up the most unearthly screams crying for help.

The boys all grabbed their guns, as though to help him, leaving the poor trembling Johnny alone to follow the bent of his own inclination. By and by, after firing several shots, they came into camp with the fellow who had done the calling, wrapped up in a blanket which had been previously besmeared all over with the blood of a beef they had killed in the afternoon, making one of the most real-looking tragedies one could imagine, but when they reached camp they looked in vain for Johnny.

They began to be a little alarmed for him, when they discovered him in a tree some thirty or forty yards away. They finally succeeded in getting him down and to camp but they had scared him so badly that it was days before he was altogether himself and I candidly believe he was near to losing his mind. They never tried to scare him again, and strange as it may seem, after hearing that it was a joke he was never afraid of a panther again.

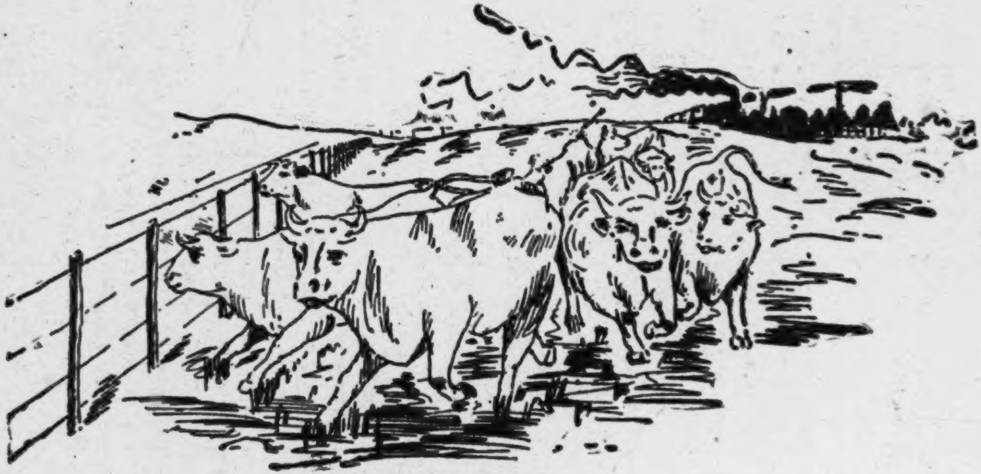
We had one peculiarly dull fellow in our outfit who was as cowardly as he was ignorant, especially when it came to a personal difficulty. Some one of the boys was always finding some ground to pick a row with him, just to see him get scared; they would let on to be very angry and he would beg like a dog. One young fellow, especially, would pick a row with Dave almost every day. He had kept it up until everyone in camp was tired of it. One day he came in and, as was his custom found some fault with Dave and began to accuse him of some very absurd things. Before anyone could hardly realize what had happened Dave knocked him down and such another pounding you scarcely ever saw a fellow get, while all the boys whooped and encouraged him to give it to him, and there is no telling how long it would have lasted if the fellow Dave had down hadn't gotten hold of a rough, wooden stake-pin. When he got it he called out "Give me my knife," and began to saw away on Dave's neck, saying at the time, "I'll cut your throat." Dave, thinking he had his knife and certain his throat was cut, just fell over and cried out, "I'm a dead man!" but when he found out he was not hurt he gave the boys due and timely warning that he could fight, and to make his word good he gave two or three of them a good pounding before they would let him alone. He taught them to respect his muscle if they did not respect his brain.

Sometimes in camp, as in other places, practical jokes were not so funny to the perpetrators as they might wish. There was a young fellow came out to our country from the East; he was a great big, overgrown boy about eighteen or nineteen years of age. He had a brother-in-law in the cattle business and went on a round-up with an outfit from our range.

One night his brother-in-law put up a job on the boy to scare him. It was before the Indians had ceased to make their monthly raids into our settlements. The brother-in-law and two others fixed up as Indians and the fourth man took the boy out some distance from camp to see if their horses were doing well. They had looked through the bunch and found them all right and just as they were starting for camp the three men made their appearance from behind an embankment and fired their pistols in the air. The boys broke to run, the supposed Indians in pursuit, firing as they came. The one who had enticed the lad away from camp fell, and called to him not to leave him, he was shot. The boy wheeled round and drew his pistol, began firing, and before they could reach shelter had wounded his brother-in-law in two places and one of the others, I think. I am not too certain of that but have seen his brother-in-law many times since and he will go through life a cripple, the result of his folly.

One will meet with people sometimes who wish to pose as cow-men very much. One such, while on the train one day, speaking of his ranch, was asked by one of the boys, of whom there were several by, where he ranched, and when told he asked his mark and brand. The fellow really didn't know what he meant and none of the boys were surprised, for he had on celluloid collar and cuffs and toothpick shoes. A cow-puncher never togs up in such traps. I don't mean by that to be disrespectful, for many good men wear both, but a cow-boy never. When a greenhorn comes into a range he will have all sorts of impositions practiced on him until he cuts his eye-teeth. Never anything very serious but sometimes very annoying, and mortifying always, unless one is very genial and accepts it as part of his training, which is by far the better way. A young man moved into a good range and after looking round bought a bunch of cattle of a ranchman who lived some five miles from where he was stopping. He drove over a nice bunch of young cattle and gave them some salt. In the meantime several of the boys gathered on the cow-yard. By and by one of them broke out laughing; the rest of the boys knew it was a joke and began laughing also. The young fellow looked puzzled and asked an explanation. After enjoying the laugh, the one who had started it said "Bob, if I wasn't your friend I wouldn't tell you, but you have allowed that fellow to swindle you." "In what way?" asked the astonished boy. "Why those cattle are the remnant of an old stock that fellow has been working off on greeners for some time; they are an old, run-down stock and are so near run out that they have no front teeth in their upper jaw." The looks of the youngster would have been a study for an artist. It was a combination of surprise, chagrin and incredulity. All the boys chimed in to verify the statement, and to prove it to him roped several head of the cattle and let him see for himself. He finally became very angry, and when some of the boys proposed to help him drive them back and see that he got justice he readily consented, drove them back and demanded his money. The man of whom he got them, in order to carry out the joke, agreed to rue the bargain. After dinner was over they explained it to him, and he enjoyed the joke as much as anyone, drove the cattle home, and in a few years became as good a judge of a cow as any of the boys. He always knew the ones that had no teeth after that.

This is one of the methods used by the cow-boy to guy a greener, but not the only one. The name is legion. I remember once when a number of gentlemen came into camp out on the Leon river, two of them in a buggy and three others on horse-back. Before leaving the East they had provided themselves umbrellas and the little leather saddles used in New York and all of the Eastern and some of the Southern States, which are very good in town, or when a man has but little riding to do, but in working cattle a man wouldn't last until he was all gone. When the gentlemen above referred to came in sight of camp with their umbrellas stretched, every cow-boy in the outfit made a rush for his horse and ran, like a troop of wild Indians had made their appearance, and those who had no horses took it a-foot, some of them calling at the top of their voice: "Mister, please don't turn that thing loose;" others calling out: "Don't shoot, I'll give up." Some of the older fellows, whose days of such fun had passed, laughingly told the gentlemen that they needn't be frightened, as the boys were only scared at their umbrellas, but advised them to put their saddles in a good, safe place. Some of them took the joke nicely, and others got mad. They didn't say anything, however, but showed it by their looks. Finally, being assured of protection, the boys



Scene near Abilene, Tex.

came into camp very cautiously; then they opened the conversation among themselves, each telling what he thought it was, some declaring they were so bad scared they didn't have time to think. One little fellow, who as a rule kept quiet until called on, was sitting silently by, when one of the gentlemen, who seemed to enjoy the fun, asked him: "Well, my friend, what did you think it was?" Without hesitation he replied: "Buzzards;" then went on to say that mother had read to him in the Bible about some birds bringing something to eat to an old preacher, and he thought if it wasn't buzzards it was them birds coming with something to eat. "I know we're not preachers but we're good just as hard," said he, "and we're hungry, too, for human grub, and if anybody brought anything good to eat in this camp I think he should give us some." The secret of this little speech was, he had seen some canned fruit in the buggy. Some of the men of the umbrella and human saddle crowd seemed most thoroughly disgusted, as was plain from their looks, but at least two of them enjoyed the joke hugely. By and by one of the boys made it in the way to run over one of the saddles and fell full length on the ground, turning the saddle over into full view of the boys; it had been covered with a blanket or partly so. This was the occasion for another general stampede, but they rallied and gathered around the saddle and held another consultation. The final decision was that it was the chief of the hairy tribe, or something good to eat, and that as a band of civilized cow-boys they would desist from doing it bodily harm as the thing seemed to be quiet and willing to do the square thing. Then they dispersed and each went about his business, joking each other about the adventures of the morning, one of them declaring that he intended to go to meeting next Sunday, he was so glad he was alive.

CHAPTER XI.

Three of the gentlemen referred to in the preceding chapter became so thoroughly disgusted that they pulled up stakes and shoved for town as soon as dinner was over. It is needless to state that they did not eat dinner with the boys. But it is a mystery to me how they managed to pull through with their dinner, as the boys were continually bantering them to "swap grub," and all during luncheon could be heard such remarks as, "Boys, it looks like you'd offer a fellow some cake." One cow-boy said to another, "Jim, I'm nearly dead for some peaches." "Mister, I'll give you some beef for some sugar." "Say, you there! I'll call you captain if you'll give me some cake." Finally, most thoroughly out-done, one of them arose, began to bundle his duds, and, speaking to his companions, said: "I thought I was going to meet gentlemen when I came here, but I don't think I was ever so treated in my life." At that every one of the boys broke away and ran for forty or fifty yards, hiding, or seeming to hide, until our Eastern friends were entirely out of sight. They left two of their number behind, who came for business and were willing to take the cow-boy as they found him.

This story is as true to life as it is possible for an eye-witness to relate it after the lapse of twenty years. It goes to show the peculiarities of the cow-boy in an early day, and I am prepared to say that, like the proverbial "Ben. Moore's leather shirt," when he tried to wash it "it got no better fast." The boys never did such a thing simply to mortify their visitor, but to try his pluck.

One of the gentlemen of the two above referred to, who remained, in the course of the afternoon, just for the novelty of the thing, made one of the boys a present of his saddle and umbrella, and told him to have just all the fun with it he wished; and perhaps no one else but a cow-boy would have thought of doing what he did.

There was an old tree within about ten feet of the wagon, that had a limb running out near the ground. He took the saddle, put it on the limb, stretched his umbrella over him, and sat there like a statue, not speaking to any one, for over an hour. It was one of the most ridiculous sights I remember to have witnessed in camp or anywhere else.

The last time I saw him he had that little old saddle and the umbrella. The gentleman who presented them to him became one of the successful cattlemen of Texas; not on a very large scale, but a more substantial man I don't know anywhere. He is now devoting his time to the breeding of blooded cattle and horses; has one of the finest small stock farms in the State, and he owes his success in a measure to being able to take the cow-boy as he found him, and make him his friend. He thus secured their respect, love and protection; and that means something in the cattle business.

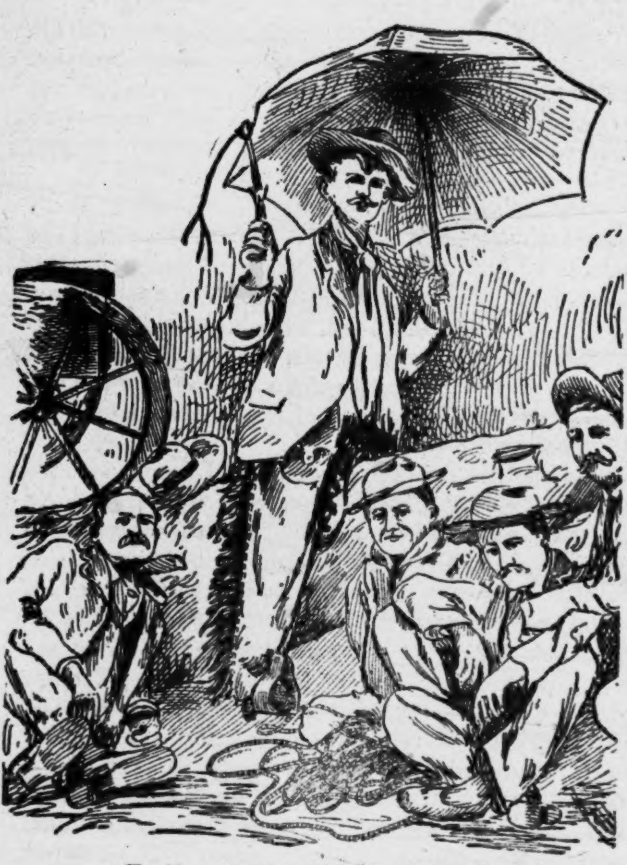
The boy of the circumstances as above related (the quiet youngster referred to in another part of this story) is now a man reasonably well-to-do, has a cultured family around him, and is one of the most devoted Christian men in the community in which he lives, universally respected and loved for his real moral worth. I merely state this to show you that all did not go to the bad; and I will state in this connection that when they did, it was the exception and not the rule, and I state nothing that I am not able to back with testimony. Of course I may err in the relation of some incidents, but have not overdrawn, and many things here given are less vividly represented than to my memory the real case would show the facts.

Some one may read this and say that those gentlemen were justly indignant. I will admit that it was trying to the nerves of a sensitive man, but will say further that the boys were just as light-hearted as they were full of fun. That was their style, and the good old adage we so often hear, "When in Rome do as Romans do" is equally applicable to the cattle ranch, and if a man came to the ranch and wished smooth sailing, he had to adapt himself to the surroundings. I have found in my short experience that the man who is incapable of drifting with the tide, bending to the breeze, runs up on many a snag in this world, and to such a one no difference if in the cow camp, or the gilded drawing rooms of a fashionable New York mansion. The rough corners are always coming in contact with his feelings; in fact there are very few places in this old world that contain unalloyed bliss for the sensitive man.

If one is to be sure of unwounded feelings, it is best to adjust himself to his surroundings, and not try to regulate his surroundings to work in harmony with his feelings; if he does the latter he simply makes a mistake. I don't mean to be understood that one is to give up principles for comfort; not so, but there is a way to lead instead of being led. I have never found that to be by brute force, but rather by kindness.

The Apostle Paul proposed to be "all things to all men" that he might perhaps be able to win some; the inference is that Paul followed the admonition given by the King in Proverbs. "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly," and by being friendly he won friends; and while he did not necessarily engage in, or even endorse any *evil practice*, *still* he used a consecrated judgment in his dealings with men, and proved that he loved them.

At another time there came to our range a couple of men, evidently from the East, who had bought some cattle for the Eastern market. The cattle were to be delivered at Fort Worth, but they came out to "rusticate." They were in camp when the outfit came in; about ten o'clock the boys brought a yearling to camp for beef. They soon had it stretched. Along toward eleven o'clock one of the boys went to where the beef was hanging, and cutting the foreleg with the shoulder blade loose from the ribs and brisket (a piece never eaten unless extreme necessity demand it), he came dragging it on the ground up to the fire where the gentlemen were, and throwing it carelessly on the fire, turned to one of the boys and said: "If that meat gets done before I get back, turn it over." He got on his horse and rode off toward the herd. and posted the



He rides a human saddle. (See page 144.)

herd hands that there were some greenhorns in camp, and what to do when they came in, this being the range camp, or rather the herders' camp; we had no cook, it was every fellow for himself.

After awhile one of the boys turned the meat over, which was charred on one side. When Rob returned he picked up the shoulder of meat, caught the shank in the fork of a limb, and turning to the strangers, said: "Gentlemen, come to dinner," and then to the boys, "Bring the bread and salt." Some of the boys in the meantime had made some coffee. The strangers came with a very poor grace, however, and they were very timid at first, but before the meal was over they both declared they had never eaten beef that was half so sweet and juicy. They remained in camp for the full time of the gathering and expressed regrets at having to go when they did. I am sure there never came to our outfit two men who were more universally liked than were these. The secret of the beef being good was that broiled beef is always good if it is fat and tender, and this was both; then it was thrown on a bed of live coals and became seared before it lost any of its flavor, and was cooked before being salted, which should always be done. The salt takes the juice out, or causes it to run out. Then to add to that a good appetite made it very palatable.

In some outfits it was customary to pick up the first thing one came to regardless of whom it belonged to. This was a constant annoyance to one who wished to live in common decency, for it was sometimes carried to outrageous extremes. For instance, a man rode up and pulled off his saddle and hung his quirt on the horn and went about his dinner. Some one would want a quirt, spurs, blankets, or anything else, and would lift the article wanted from the other man's saddle and go.

At one time one of the boys had been to St. Louis and came home with a beautiful pipe; when he had the boys all together, he said. "Now, boys, you know the custom in this outfit of taking the first thing one comes to. I have here a beautiful pipe that I prize very highly, because of the fact it is a present to me from a friend. Now when anyone wants to smoke this pipe you are welcome to it, if you will return it when you have done; but I want it distinctly understood that if any man walks off with my pipe, it will cost him a pony." They all laughed at him, but for some time no one molested the pipe. Several of them tried it, but invariably returned it. One day one of the boys picked it up and smoked it, knocking the ashes from it on his boot heel, he placed it in his pocket, mounted his pony and was gone. The next morning he had a horse out of place. He scoured the range in every quarter but couldn't raise him. Finally one of the boys saw him smoking and said: "Isn't that Joe's pipe?" He answered that it was. "Well" said the first speaker," I can tell you where your horse is" and proceeded to explain. Now it happened that this one had not been present when Joe had given the warning, or had forgotten it, the habit was so common. At any rate he was good warm (mad) and proceeded to interview Joe concerning the horse. Joe acknowledged that he had him hidden out. They had some sharp words about it, but finally the one who had the pipe produced it and Joe told him where his horse was, but wouldn't go and get him. They were soon friends again. It is useless to say that they let Joe's pipe alone afterward and the little circumstance was the means of breaking up the practice in that outfit.

Sometimes the boys would impose a fine for certain "unlawful acts," such as blowing one's nose within a certain distance of the camp fire, repeating what some notorious liar had said, using profane language before the cook, "Miss Sallie" (as the cook was generally called), throwing a rock at a horse, and many other offenses—too numerous to mention. The fine was generally, for the first offense, a plug of tobacco; for the second, two plugs; for the third, three plugs and a dressing-off with a pair of leggings, which meant to bend a fellow over a log, or something else, and give him ten licks with a pair of leather leggings. Some would walk up and take their medicine like a little man, which was far better, as such a one was not very severely "dressed;" but I have seen men protest quite vigorously, but don't remember a single case when it did any good. And when one appeared very "obstropulous," the fine could be doubled, and it was invariably done, unless at the termination of the ten strokes the victim begged for mercy and pardon, in which case it was always granted. I have, however, seen men hold out until their punishment was very severe, and in rare instances I have known personal difficulties to grow out of it, but it was the exception. As a rule they felt so comfortable after it quit smarting they were glad enough to laugh it off and say no more about it, as they had the whole outfit against them, for in making rules it was always by a majority vote, and it will be remembered that, with rare exceptions, we were all Democrats. You ask why? Simply because our fathers before us were, and we were exactly like ninety-nine out of a hundred people with whom you meet. If called upon to give an intelligent reason for their religion or politics they couldn't do it. Many men who boast and blow about Democratic or Republican principles, if they were to meet one in the road would have to be introduced to it, and then they would be simply taking some one else's word for it.

I don't know so much about the Republicans as I do the Democrats, but if one was to introduce to a southern Democrat a Republican principle under the assumed name of tariff reform, he would take it to his bosom and cherish it as the idol of his heart, with a very few honorable exceptions of course. From what I have been able to learn, the same is true of the northern Republican. The principal reason is that the majority of people in the world don't think for themselves, but allow a few fellows to do it all for them.

Suppose the same rule was applied to the physical body, as the one appropriated by the political body. To illustrate, suppose we let one out of a thousand eat for us and we go about howling about how good it was, one can readily see the result. They would soon dwindle down, dry up and blow away to the unknown shores of eternity; and from a cow-boy's standpoint, that will be the condition of our body politic in the near future, if people don't wake up and think for themselves, learn to do more and howl less, and in this alone the safety of the government lies.

In our rulings in camp, we allowed the good old Democratic principle of "Let the majority rule" to guide us. Although I have never been able to find out why that was called a Democratic principle more than Republican. As the foundation of our Republican institutions has this as one of its chief cornerstones, and every Republican I have interviewed believes in it, yet the Democrats have appropriated it and call it "ourn."

Sometimes for want of better amusement the boys would hold court, and many of them knew how as they had been there. We would empanel a jury, elect a constable, sheriff, bailiff, prosecuting attorney, and judge, clerk and all. We would have some of the most amusing trials. We would get some fellow up, usually who had really been guilty of some misdemeanor, and bring in the real witnesses. One to appreciate it must attend such a trial. Some of the boys were very well posted in the law. It would make a book worth reading just to record one of such trials when a large outfit were engaged in it; and to a bystander who was not in it, it would have been real to an alarming extent sometimes.

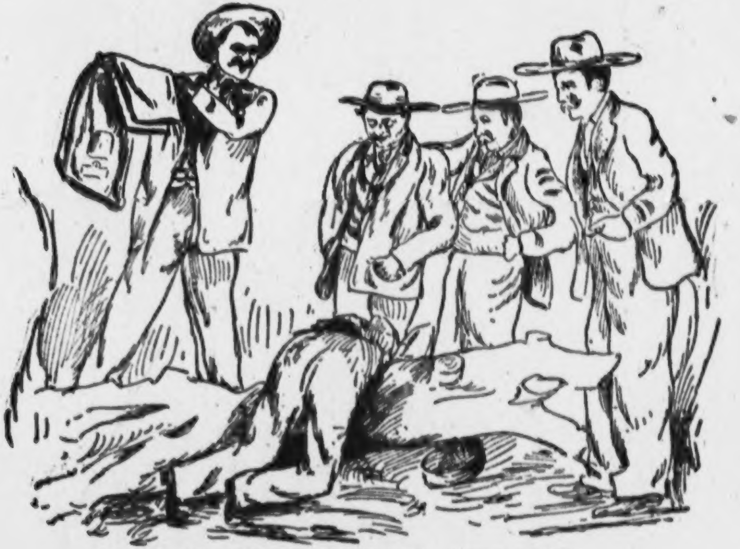
At other times when none of the religious men of the outfit were in camp, or even if there were, should they be those for whom the boys had no respect on account of their inconsistent lives, they would hold mock religious services (however, there were ungodly men in almost every outfit that would never engage in or encourage anything of the sort. Many of them where they could do so would prevent it.) There was one young boy in an outfit that I was working with who could hear a sermon preached and get up a month afterwards and reproduce it almost word for word. I don't think I would be exaggerating to say that there were three preachers of his acquaintance, whose sermons he stored away, and these he could reproduce at will. To say the least, he had a remarkable memory and was good at mimicry. He could use the gestures of the three men to a very taking degree. When he was in camp, there would be preaching, as a rule, twice each week. One night after he had preached a complete sermon he took the boys down to the creek and had them all in the water. He had emersed several when part of the embankment caved, and came near drowning them. After that he never would preach a Campbellite sermon; saying that he was convinced that emersion was not right and that the Lord was trying to kill him for it. Let me say just here, that his arguments were just about as logical as many I have heard by Christian people in favor of or against any theory they might have. Instead of God's eternal truth, they take some circumstance in life as the foundation and proof of their argument.

One evening some months after this circumstance occurred, the same boy was reproducing or reciting the Methodist sermon he had heard the night before at a camp-meeting fifteen miles below the ranch on the Colorado river; when all of a sudden one of the boys jumped up and began to exhort him to desist, and with tears and pleadings succeeded in running the boys all out of camp. Finally he got his horse and started down to the meeting. Some of them followed and tried to get him to return, but without avail; so they went with him and when they reached the meeting ground, it aroused the whole camp and such another time as they had can better be imagined than described. That boy quit the ranch and went into the ministry, but was not called the cow-boy preacher. I mean the one who was converted that night. It broke up preaching in that camp. The one who preached that night, afterwards became a worker in the church.

CHAPTER XII.

THE COW-BOY IN RELATION TO SLANG.

The use of slang has become so common among the American people that it is a little hard to tell sometimes what the term means. Many slangy expressions are so common as to become proper, if we are to be governed by the time-honored rule, that use is the law of language. Take the expressions, "get there," "he got there all the same," "all the same," "that's right," "your right," "I should say so," "that's what's the matter," "he couldn't quite cut it," "blaze away," "fly in," "go for him," "he went for him," and a hundred others. In fact one must needs be a finished scholar, not only in theory, but in practice, to know the unadulterated English when he hears it; and some slang expressions are so expressive that one hardly feels like objecting to them. I had heard slang so universally condemned, and had the northern and eastern people held up as models worthy of imitation so often, that I had about decided that we poor Texans were an isolated mixed herd of half hog and half alligator sort of animal, and that we were the most outrageously slangy set on the face of the earth. In consequence, I was most thoroughly brought into sympathy with the Reverend Sam. P. Jones, for the abuse that was heaped upon him for the use of slang. Except in cases where some little popgun of a preacher tried to put on Mr. Jones' pants and waltz round on his stamping ground, nearly all the ministers outside of the Methodist Church were



He "Cussed before Miss Sallie". (See page 151.)

firing into the gentleman. They wouldn't say, I am shooting at Sam Jones, but would cock their little old hog leg pistols and point out over the congregation and say: "Look out there now, I am going to shoot, and I won't call any names; but I am shooting at the man who says when preaching, "You grand old rascals." In fact the one who lectured through Texas on "get there," and they fire away.'

I had noticed that when the gentleman above referred to had conducted the meetings, the devil had been very considerably exercised over what he had said and the great racket the old fellow raised was in regard to his slang. I assert again that I was greatly in sympathy with Mr. Jones, because he seemed so closely allied to the poor, ignorant, uncultured cowboy, and I supposed it was because he did not know any better. In the course of a few years of more intimate association with people of all classes, I changed my mind in regard to the reasons prompting him to the use of such bad English. I decided that if a man wished to become a missionary among the Mexicans, the first thing necessary would be to familiarize himself with their language and the best way to do that would be to live among them, for the simple reason, that if he learned to speak the Spanish, he could go ahead and preach to hundreds of them, where he could not afford to take the time to teach them the English before trying to preach to them. If he tried to preach to them in English without first teaching them the language, it would be simply folly. They would not understand him. Mr. Jones evidently understood this and simply went out in his work to reach the greatest number of people possible, and in order to do so he speaks to them in their own language. For I have been in the Southern, Eastern, Northern and part of the Western States, and nowhere have I been that slang was not used by the masses. I don't believe it should be the case, but it is so, and for people to stand out and berate a preacher for the use of slang and in their condemnation use the very expressions they are condemning in him, it reminds one of the old story, 'Pot calling kettle black-face. I heard a lady berating a minister for using slang. She was speaking in the presence of her children and said: "I think that a minister who will use such slang in the pulpit ought to have a head put on him." Now this lady was a professed follower of the Lord and had often said that she was going to make a minister of her little boy. The hardest thing for me to comprehend is how people can make such distinctions as that it is worse to use slang in the pulpit than around the family fireside. God has said to parents, "Bring them (your children) up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," and again, "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it." In other words, the way in which you train him, when he is old that way will he walk.

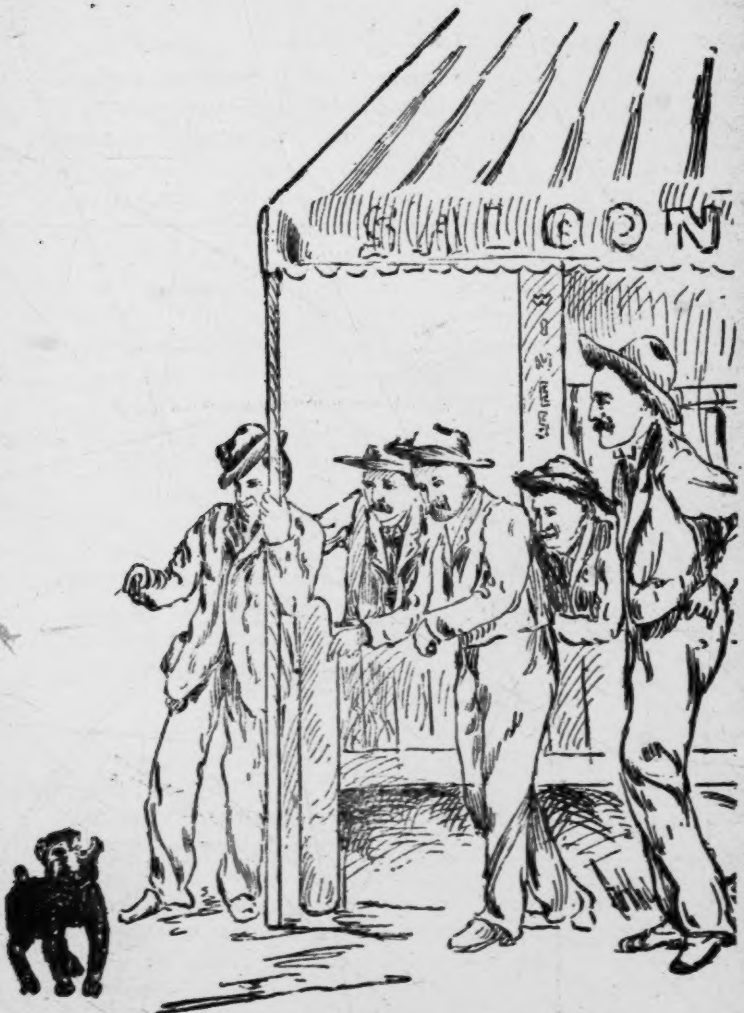
A young lady teacher at Monteagle, Tennessee, said to me once: "I would like to go to Texas if the state of society was not so bad, and I believe it would scare me to death to meet one of those cow-boys. Why, they tell me that they do not use any other language but slang." I admitted that they were quite prolific in the use of the obnoxious dialect; in less than two minutes that same young lady, upon being reminded that she would be late at the round table if she was not careful, remarked as though it was her native tongue: "I'll get there all the same," and turning to her companion who had just entered the room and who had worn this young lady's gloves on a tramp to the Forest Ridge, she said: "Never mind, Miss, I'll get even with you and don't you forget it." I thought to myself: "if I lived as near you as you do to me, I would come to see you every day." I had a brother who stopped one night with an old granger in eastern Texas and when they were at the table one of the little fellows asked for gravy but could not say gravy. He called it "dravy." One of his little brothers who was older, and consequently wiser, said to him: "Iss I touldn't say dravy better en you tan I'd say drease by dranny."

And when one finds that they can't practice what they preach better than many people who condemn the use of "slang in the pulpit," I think they had better quit harping on that particular subject. The wrong that I can see in the use of slang is that it panders to the low and vulgar. It usually starts from a source that to say the least is hardly creditable, and it is always in the direction of lowering the standard of the purer English, and as I candidly agree with Dr. Black of the Missouri Valley College, when before the Synod of Texas he said that the English speaking people were the ones to bring this old world to our Lord, the Christ, I am very decidedly in favor of maintaining the English in its purity, and slang expressions are superfluous in the pulpit or out of it, and why all this namby pamby milk and cider fuss about the pulpit no place for this, that and the other? If I read my Bible and interpret it aright, "Ye are the temple of God" 1st Corinthians, 3: 16-17. And if that be true then it is criminal to use slang in the pulpit, my Xian friend, it is criminal to let it pass your own lips. No difference what I have said and shall say about slang among cow-boys, I am unconditionally opposed to the use of it in the pulpit, out of the pulpit, in the home and every other place (though I fall short of what I know to be the proper thing), for I am in favor of educating the millions of people who are coming to our shores in the English not as it is now spoken, but as it should be spoken in its purity, and just as they hear it that is the way they will speak it, and I want to see the day in America that the English speaking people will control our Government. I am opposed to any man that can not read and write the English language having a voice in the control of this Government, and until our franchise is regulated so as to shut out ignorance and foreign domination we are drifting toward the shipwreck of our republican institutions.

We now return to the subject. Slang in the cow-camp, like the cow-boy in politics, has no rule to regulate it, but is a creature of circumstances, and the cow-boy in this regard at least is like Napoleon Boneparte who, when the allied powers submitted a proposition to him, that if he would capitulate they would make him the King of some rather insignificant possession, his reply was that he thanked them, he was in the habit of making those things himself. So the cow-boy is under no obligation to any one for his slang and no one is responsible for it, as he makes it for himself. The simplest English sentence may by some chance circumstance be converted into a slang phrase by being misapplied. To illustrate, a number of the boys were one day standing on the corner of a street in a western town when a little black dog came trotting across the public square; they were making some very unkind remarks about the dog, as he had no tail and his ears were cut off. An old drunken fellow standing holding to a sign post took in the situation and in his half-drunken, foolish way said: "Something seldom about that little black pup." This created quite a deal of mirth; the boys took it up from that and to-day there is not an expression more universally in use in the West among the boys than this one, "Something seldom," and the variety of uses to which this expression is subject is something curious; for instance, if one sees a very fat horse "there is something seldom about that horse," if very poor, "something seldom about him" if very large or small it is the same. If a young lady is handsome, "something seldom about that girl" if very homely "something seldom." It is applied to tall people, short people, fat people, lean people, good houses, bad houses, one-eyed people, cross-eyed people, fast horses, fine cattle, scrubby cattle, good preachers, bad preachers—anything and anybody under any and all circumstances conceivable. There is "something seldom" about them.

The expression "old taller" is used very largely in the same way, except that it usually has some specific meaning, and originated from something of a legitimate source, as old taller (or tallow) is the best quality of tallow, being that gotten from a fat old cow or steer, and is much firmer and more substantial than that of younger cattle. When a real fat cow was found, the habit of saying "she was old tallow" grew to be quite universal; from that, anything that was fat was "taller," and if real fat was "old taller." Then it became quite common. If any of the boys became very fleshy or rosy, some one would say, "Old boy, you are getting to be old taller," and so it grew to be a term universally applied to fat people, cattle and everything else. I never forget an instance where one of the boys came near getting "crawled," as he termed it. Several young ladies were in a store trading; one of them was very fleshy, and this young fellow remarked that the one with the red dress was "shore taller." Her father happened to hear him and demanded an explanation. The fellow begged the old man's pardon, and said he only meant that she was fine looking, which was really true.

Yet I would suggest that one of the most unmanly things for any one to be guilty of is to stand on the streets and make remarks about ladies who happen to pass, and, though unthinkingly done by good men, yet it is very uncalled for, and, as one respects his sisters and mother, he should never do it. If he has no respect for them, and has so far fallen beneath the dignity of a true gentleman as to wilfully do such a thing, then a lady is not injured by his remarks



Something seldom about that pup. (See page 163.)

any more than if any other flop-eared hound were to bark at her.

Another expression, though used metaphorically, may be interesting. If anything occurs to very much discommode one, or something occurs that greatly disappoints or annoys one, a common expression among the boys when relating it is to say, "He looked so bad his ears flopped." I remember a poor fellow who was with us on the road, hauling lumber out from Lampasas to one of the western counties. He was very heavily loaded, and drove into a little gully, or deep, narrow ditch, and broke his wagon. One of the boys, in describing it, and telling how bad Charley looked, said, "The poor fellow, I was sorry for him; he looked so bad his ears flopped."

In describing how anything, animal or man, got out of the way, they "leaned forward and shoved." To illustrate, one of the boys was caught away from his horse, and a bad cow was going for him, when some one, who was safe, called out to him, "Look out, Jess." He didn't take time to look, but started for the first tree at a two-forty gait, and he was so much in earnest that he "leaned forward and shoved" If any one looked very badly from sickness he "looked like a motherless calf." If one horse beat another very badly in a race he beat him "from where you laid the chunk." This became so common that "the chunk" was left off, and it was "from where you laid her." If any one succeeded in accomplishing an object, as finding a horse or cow, or anything that was of any importance, such as beating a case in court or winning in a horse race, one would ask, "Did you beat them, Don?" Instead of saying, "Yes, sir," in English unvarnished, or "you bet," as our Yankee cousins, he would say "you hearner, Charity."

I do not think I ever heard the expression, "you said something" in camp. It was "you said it," "you hit 'er pard," "that's its shape." In fact, the most decent slang of civilization would be perverted by the cow-boy. If a man played a good game at pool or billiards "he shoots 'em like the Watsons;" or anything well done was "like the Watsons." If you ask one to join you in any enterprise, great or small, significant or otherwise, if he was willing he did not say, "I will," but instead "I've got your company." If two men had a misunderstanding and one jumped on the other, or struck him, one telling it afterward would say, "he went to him all spraddled out." If a horse could run well but was not the best, it was "he can't fly but he can catch birds." If an animal was good blood, it was as "fine as split silk." If one was willing to stay by a fellow in trouble, he would stand by him "as long as there was a button on Jabe's coat." If one was lost "he didn't know straight up;" if drunk, "he couldn't hit the ground with his hat"—"as drunk as a biled owl." If a man was homely he was as ugly "as galvanized sin;" if he was rascally, he was "a double back-action, adjustable fraud;" "as dirty as a flop-eared hound." If one man betrayed confidence with another "he gave him dirt;" if he was untrustworthy, he was "dirty;" if worthless, "he wasn't worth a barrel of shucks;" if lazy, he was "too slow to grow fast," "molasses wouldn't run down his legs."

One of the men who usually did the shoeing for the ranch was in the very ungenerous habit of whipping his wife and children. I do not say this of personal knowledge but the boys said he did and I believe it to be true. He would not do so when sober, but was never sober when he could secure the "red eye." Invariably when he went to town he would get drunk, and when he did his mule usually threw him off before he got home. Once, while coming home, his mule, as usual, threw him to the ground and ran out into the woods. One of the boys being with him, rode 'round her, and the drunken fellow came stumbling on behind, when he aroused a rattlesnake, fell headlong right on top of it, and the snake bit him. The fellow who was with him got him home as soon as he could and came running up to the ranch. Several of the boys were congregated in the cow-yard and saw him coming. Some one said, "Something is wrong or that fellow would never get such a move on him as that." When he came up he was asked what the matter was, and he said "Bud was snake-bit." One rakish fellow sitting by asked, "Did it hurt the snake?" "Of course not," was the reply. "Then you needn't trouble about him," was the sarcastic suggestion; and it is a fact it did not hurt him.

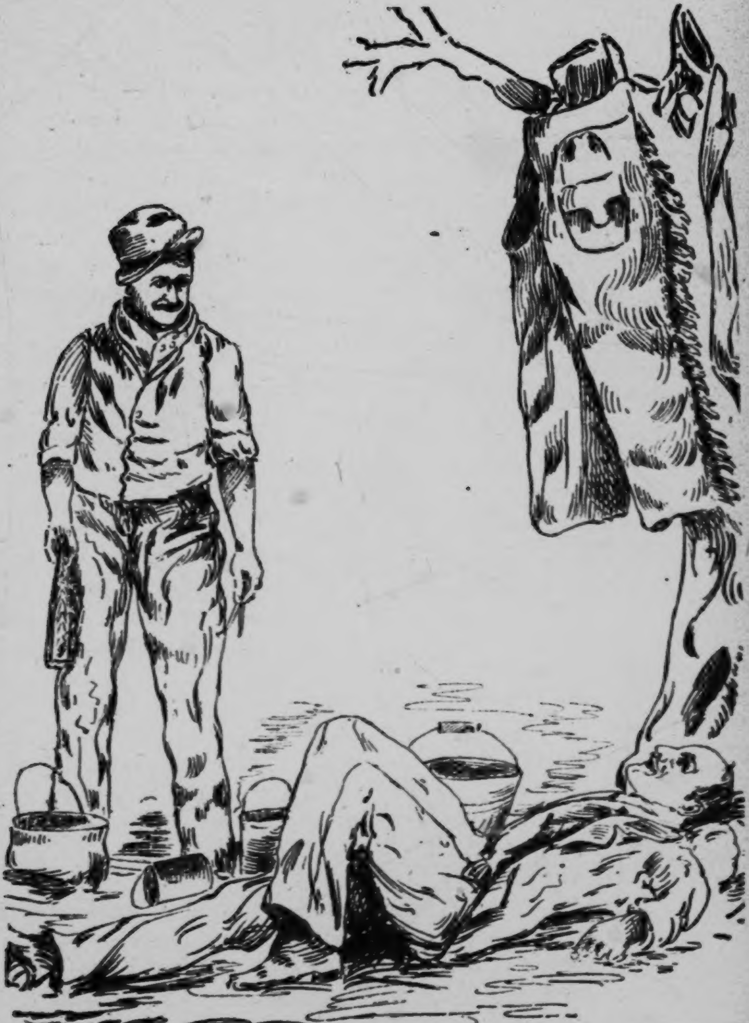
I know one fellow who was so lazy that he became the laughing-stock of the outfit; he, however, always denied the charge. At one time the boys got him up for a phrenologist to examine his head. The moment the professor put his hands on him he remarked, "Here is a man who will never lie in the corner of the fence and let the hogs eat him up." The fellow looked 'round at the boys, as much as to say "I knew I wasn't lazy," but the next words of the professor cooked him. Said he: "I do believe he would let them eat off one leg before he would hollo 'Suey!'"

CHAPTER XIII.

PECULIARITIES OF THE COW-BOY.

Some very amusing things occur even in a court of justice. Once in the history of our range the Indians made a raid through the country and took several horses from our outfit, the boys followed and overtook them, whipped the rascals out and recaptured every horse we had lost except one belonging to a Mr. T—. Among the bunch retaken was a little mule which the boys, after consultation decided that T—should take as he was the only loser. He kept the little fellow for, perhaps, a couple of years, then traded him off. He had a neighbor who had in his general make up instead of the milk of human kindness the bitterness of demoniacal cussedness, who when his neighbor T— sold the mule, appeared in the role of a lover of justice and had Mr. T— indicted for theft. This neighbor, like many of his stripe, when the Indians were in the country never stirred outside of his own little cow-yard. I don't think this fellow ever saddled his horse to go on a raid. If he did he didn't intend to go when he saddled up. One thing that was peculiarly noticeable among such liberty-loving, law-abiding citizens, when the occasion presented itself to go out and fight for the protection of their families and property, they took very suddenly ill with cramp, colic or something worse. In fact, the mention of an American Indian would make their knees smite one against the other, and like Belshazzar of old they seemed to see the handwriting on the wall. No wonder, as a rule a mean contemptible character is as cowardly as he is mean. However, it may be that they were going on the principle that they had lost no Indians and therefore were not hunting them.

When T— was brought to trial his companions in the raid were summoned as witnesses. The prosecuting attorney, a young lawyer from "back East," was particularly anxious to prove himself equal to the occasion, therefore made himself very officious. They put one of the boys on the stand, a real bright young cow-fellow, but one who was a type of his class. The attorney for the defense had asked the question if the men of the scouting party had agreed for T— to take the mule, to which he had received an affirmative answer. When the attorney for the prosecution took the witness, the first question he asked was "Did I understand you to say that you all agreed for Mr. T— to take the mule?" The witness answered "I don't know." The attorney flew up and said "Yes, but you did say it." "I know I did and, it is so," replied the witness. "You just now said you did not know, what do you mean by that?" "I mean that I don't know what you understood me to say as I am not the guardian of your understanding." After some gerrymandering the lawyer again put the question, this time, "Did you say, etc.," and received an answer in the affirmative. After several questions in which there was more or less bantering the lawyer asked "Did you all tacitly acquiesce to T— taking the mule?" The witness hesitated for a moment and with the light of mischief written plainly



Jimmie, the Cook, as a Philosopher. (See page 1

on his countenance said "Partner, you will have to chew it finer than that," at which the lawyer fairly turned red and tore his hair and insisted that he should have an answer to his question. The judge who had not gotten the full run of the questions and answers, as there were twelve jurymen to hear it, turning to the witness commanded him to answer the question. "Well" said he, "say it again." "Did you all tacitly acquiesce to T— taking the mule?" came the question. Turning to the judge the witness said "Judge, I don't know what he means by that but I am willing to do what is right about it." Suffice it to say the question was changed.

Sometimes one will run across a diamond in the rough on the range as in any other country or station in life. Such a one was found in the person of the cook "Miss Sallie," or more properly designated as "Jimmie, the Cook." Jimmie was, indeed, a philosopher and his deductions were beyond appeal, his logic would admit of no contradiction. The boy had a rule of his own for arriving at a conclusion. He was an incessant worker; you could hardly find him idle at any time, and while preparing a meal he would work so hard and stand so closely over the fire that the perspiration would collect on his face and run down like a spring shower. When Jimmy was about to make a report those who were familiar with his manners and customs always knew it. He had a habit of raising his arm and wiping the perspiration from his brow with his sleeve, usually he had a shovel in one hand and a poker in the other and when he turned to the boys, or any one of them, in this way they knew he was going to say something.

There was one of the boys in the outfit that Jimmy had a special liking for and while he was not a demonstrative fellow he did not try to hide his admiration for this man, but would call him to one side and confide to him his secrets and ask his advice. In fact, he was Jimmie's counselor, and it is to him that I owe the little scraps of story that go to prove Jimmie a philosopher.

One of the boys had been to St. Louis with cattle, and on his return for some time the outfit heard nothing but St. Louis. He would no more than strike the ground in camp until it was St. Louis. It was St. Louis for breakfast, St. Louis for dinner and St. Louis for supper until it became a little monotonous to the boys who had not been to St. Louis.

One day Mr. Owen, Jimmie's counselor, came into camp a little in advance of the boys. When he had located himself comfortably under the shade of a tree close to the camp-fire where Jimmie was at work the boy turned to him, drew his arm across his brow and said: "Mr. Owen, John Morgan is always talking about St. Louis this, and St. Louis that, and St. Louis t'other and I don't suppose there's a man in this outfit that 'ain't' been to Waco, Texas, and I have an idea that it's four times as big as St. Louis."

After a hearty laugh at the boy's way of putting it, Owen assumed a sober, earnest expression and said: "Yes, Jimmie, you are right about it, and if I was you the first time John Morgan branches out about St. Louis

I'd tell him of it. I would give him a piece of my mind, and if you will do it I'll back you in it. In fact. I have been thinking that I would do it myself, but it would be better for you to. It would hack him to know that the cook knew more than to swallow all of his gags about St. Louis."

"I'll do it," says Jimmie, and returned to his work, but the next time John came into camp it was the same old song, St. Louis, St. Louis and nothing but St. Louis. By-and-by Jimmie turned to him and drawing his hand across his face said: "John Morgan, you are always talking about St. Louis this, St. Louis that, and St. Louis the t'other just like nobody had ever been anywhere but you, and I don't reckon they's a man here that hain't been to Waco, Texas, and it's four times as big as St. Louis," and turning to his friend, said: "Ain't it, Mr. Owen?" To which he readily received an answer in the affirmative. It completely raised the camp, every one in the outfit agreed to Jimmie's proposition and turned it on poor John, after that, when he accidentally mentioned St. Louis some one would call out, "Go to Waco," until the boy was afraid to say St. Louis.

Jimmie was satisfied, the boys carried the joke for him, and unless he has learned better since, he holds the city of Waco, Texas, in awe as among the natural wonders in the way of cities, in the great free State of Texas and the world.

Some of the boys had been to the New Orleans Exposition and had a great sight of information on their return. On one occasion when Jimmie caught his favorite alone he said to him: "Mr. Owen, they talk a heap about this New Orleans Exposition and from what I can find out it is nothing on earth but the same thing that was up at Philadelphy a few years ago and they called it the Centennial, and I have an ide they will have it somewhere else next time and call it by some other name, don't you think so?"

After a hearty laugh Owen told him that he was right about it, that he had known it all along, but did not think about anybody else catching on, that it was only a dodge of the owners of the thing to fool people and get them to come and see it. And sure enough Jimmie was right, for here we run right up on the thing in Chicago only by another name. It is now the World's Fair or the Columbian Exposition, so you see Jimmie is still ahead.

The cow-boy is the roughest character on a stale joke you will find in a week's travel. In fact, it matters very little how new or spicy a story may be if the outfit wish to hack a fellow they will guy him in a hundred different ways. When the subject they wish to hack tells anything, some one will start it by saying: "That sounds to me," then every man in the outfit usually takes it up and carries it 'round "that sounds to me" and when it has gone the rounds some one will turn to another and say: "What do you think of that?" First one answer and then another will be given, one heard it in '47, another wants a little evidence on it, says that it would look real nice with a little evidence, another don't believe a word of it, still another believes part of it but can't swallow it whole.

In this way they test a man's metal, if he takes his medicine and does not get angry, it is much easier; when they see that he is disposed to stand the test they are not nearly so hard on him. But if he gets mad and sulks he is a very unfortunate man. After they have tested a man, if anyone tries a second time to hack that one, they turn the tables on him.

Sometimes a joke follows a fellow for years. There was a young man some years ago who had quite a nice start in cattle and a nice farm, he had a very severe case of sore eyes, in fact, it had run on till it was chronic. He was courting a young lady and proposed to her (so the story goes). He told her that he knew he was not pretty, but he had the spondulix all the same (spondulix is one name for money in Texas). After he was gone his sweetheart told her mother what he had said, being a new-comer she did not know what spondulix was, so she said: "I wonder if that is what's the matter with his eyes?"

The boys often told it on him whether there was a word of truth in it or not, but he was one of the best natured fellows on earth and usually took it in good humor; in fact, that was the best way for a man to do, it saved him a great sight in the long run.

Many people go to Texas, or did so in the early days, expecting to sit down and grow rich; in fact they come out there to grow up with the country, and many of them go up before the country does.

Of all countries in my knowledge, I do not know of one that has so little use for a lazy man, while a man with a small capital can start easier and live better there than anywhere I can mention, provided he has energy and pluck. Still, a poor man who is lazy and thriftless might just as well be in Hades with his back broke as in Texas, especially in the western part. The easiest place in the State for him is down in the piney woods of eastern Texas, where he can chew pine rosin and dry up, making it easy for the wind to blow him away.

The discovery of iron in Cherokee and other portions of eastern Texas will one day make that section unhealthy for a lazy man, or the man who comes there merely to ventilate himself; or, in the characteristic language of the cow-boy, "to pile on dog."

There is a story told of a young fellow riding along in an old ox wagon, when the steers took fright, ran away and turned the wagon over, throwing the young fellow under the bed. It was so heavy that he could not turn it alone; hearing a man coming along the road, he called to him to come help him out. It so happened that the young man imprisoned under the wagon-bed was just at that age we call the gosling when his voice was changing and he had no control of it; once very fine and again very coarse. He called out in a very fine voice: "Mister, I wish you would come and help me out." The gentleman said: "All right," and dismounted; but the young fellow spoke again, this time in a coarse bass voice: "Be quick about it." The man who had volunteered his services said: "If there are two of you, you can stay there," and so saying climbed on his horse and rode away.

There came a "Jim Crow" circus to a little town in the West and of course everybody went, among the rest an outfit of cow-boys in full uniform. The ring-master had a little mule performing some very interesting tricks; among them he could turn him at will from going in any one direction around the ring to the opposite. He offered any man in the audience $50 who would ride the mule 'round the ring three times without stopping. Several of the boys tried it and failed; they didn't hesitate to try it as there was nothing at stake, but the mule would lie down, roll over, turn suddenly on his hind feet—any way not to go 'round—all in obedience to signs made by the ring-master. By and by a big fellow, who was nearly as large as the mule, came out and said he didn't want the showman's money for nothing, but would bet him $50 that he could ride the mule 'round the ring three times. The boys all knew him and were satisfied he would do it, so several smaller bets were made. When everything was ready, Frank, who had on his spurs and leggings, jumped on the little mule, jerked off his hat, put the spurs to the mule's flanks, at the same time bringing his hat down over its head, and before you could have counted ten had that little animal spinning 'round the ring at a two-forty gate; and he did not stop at three times, but ran him 'round five or six times, the ring-master the while making signs and cutting all sorts of capers, but Frank had that mule so scared and excited that the master was nowhere to be seen. It was the attraction of the evening. The master did not want to give up the money, but he had to.

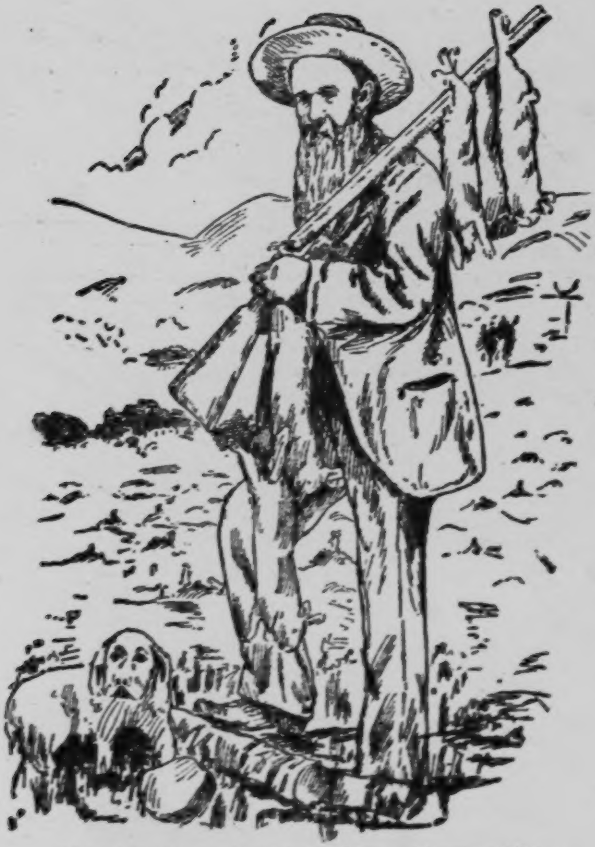
You may call the cow-boy horned and may think him hard to tame;
  You may heap vile epithets upon his head,
But to know him is to like him, notwithstanding his hard name;
  For he will divide with you his beef and bread.

If you see him on his pony as he scampers o'er the plain,
  You would think him wild and woolly to be sure.
But his heart is warm and tender when he sees a friend in pain,
  Though his education is but to endure.

When the storm breaks in its fury and the lightning's vivid flash
  Makes you thank the Lord for shelter and for bed,
Then it is he mounts his pony and away you see him dash,
  No protection but the hat upon his head.

Such is life upon a cow ranch, and the half was never told,
  But you never find a kinder-hearted set
Than the cattleman at home; be he either young or old,
  "He's a daisy from away back—don't forget."

When you fail to find a pony or a cow that's gone astray,
  Be that cow or pony wild or be it tame,
The cow-boy, like the drummer (and the bed-bug, too), they say,
  Brings him to you, for he "gets there just the same."



Not much of a day for rabbits either. (See page 186.)

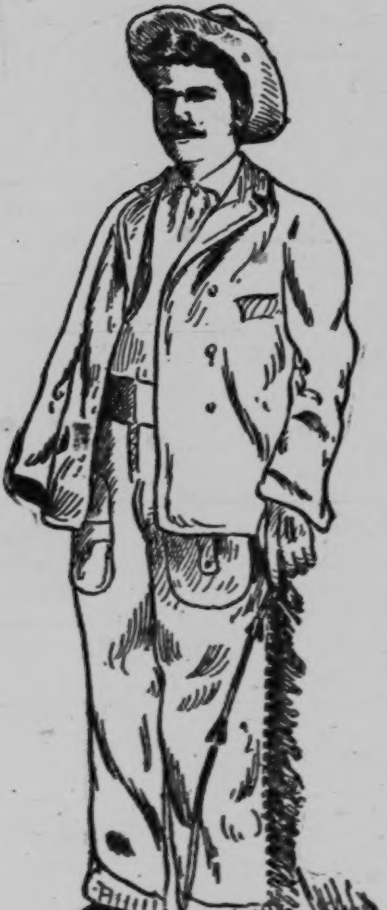
CHAPTER XVI.

THE PRAIRIE DOG AND COTTON TAIL RABBIT.

I have read a great many extravagant stories about the prairie dog and his systematic way of laying off his town, etc., one writer goes so far as to say that in every town you could find a public square or plaza, where all the older dogs gathered to regulate the affairs of the city, and that the little dogs could be seen marching up and down the streets like sentries and at regular intervals they would rise on their hind feet, look all around and if everything was not exactly right, would give a warning signal upon which every dog in the town would run to his hole, and on arriving, give a return signal, as good as to say "All right here." Now to an unpolished cow-puncher this story "sounds." It would not be polite in me to say that the gentleman lied, but one thing I can say, the story was very much tinctured with the element we breathe, in other words, it sounds like a big wind pudding. The prairie dog is a very interesting little animal in his manners and custom, but more interesting to the adventurous farmer, until he has been exterminated. It is no difficulty, however, to rid a farm of the little pest. I knew one farmer to kill every dog on a three hundred and twenty acre farm in three days. He simply poisoned them with strychnine. It is an easy matter to fence against them, as they will seldom cross a twelve-inch board. The prairie dog, like the buffalo and the cow-boy, as well as the uncivilized Indian, has had the sentence passed, and his days are numbered, especially in the farming district, and he seldom burrows where the land is worthless.

The cotton tail rabbit is a constant companion of the prairie dog, not in his personal association while feeding, but in the prairie dog town will always be found the rabbit, the prairie owl, and often the dangerous rattle snake. In the accompanying illustration may be seen the results of an hour's hunt in a dog town. This picture was taken from life at Merkel, Taylor county, Texas. In the background may be seen the little dog town, the dogs playing around the mouth of their den.

The jack-rabbit is another interesting resident of Texas. They are very easy to kill, but when on their pins are not so easy to catch. About two things could be mentioned as the only way to catch a jack-rabbit: one is a greyhound and the other is a well directed bullet. An interesting story is told of an old drunken fellow who was one day talking to a minister. He was just about as full of red eye as he could well get along with. It is possible that he might have been able to hit the ground with his hat, but it would have been all he could have done. The conversation, judging from the parties interested, was, of course, of a religious nature. A large, blue greyhound came up. The drunken man discovered the dog and called him; laying his hand upon the dog's head he said: "Good doggie;" turning to the minister he asked: "Pars'n, dishe ever see a greyhoun' run rabit?" The preacher admitted that he had. The drunken man continued:



A Chicago Lawyer in cow-boy costume. (See page 180.)

"Well, pars'n, fore these wire fences come to this country you ought seen ish dog run a rabbit; when 'er got started out cross the prairie you could see for half a mile behind 'im nothing but a blue streak of dog."

In closing this short sketch of life on the range I wish again to say that I have left out much that would be interesting, some of which I would not record in this book, as I wish to send this little story on a special mission. The object I will leave for surmise until you see my next, which will come before the public as "Shoe String Joe." You may ask if my real motive was not to make money. If I did not want money I would not be a true type of the American. I will not be hoggish, but will be satisfied with ten thousand dollars the first year and don't expect to grumble if I never make a sale. It is some satisfaction to know that a cow-puncher can write a book, whether it ever amounts to anything or not.

The subject of the accompanying illustration is not a real cow-boy, but a young man whom I met in the picture gallery, who, upon seeing my leggings, expressed a desire for his own picture in cow-boy costume. I agreed to let him have the outfit. He was dressed in the height of fashion, had on tooth-pick shoes, high standing collar and a silk hat, which the cow-boy never wears. If I had not been tender-hearted, he would have put on my leggings and posed as a cow-boy with those human togs on; but I let the milk of human kindness in me overbalance my better business judgment. I fixed him up and made a first-class cow-boy of him in appearance. You notice he unfortunately has but one arm, and you may think he couldn't be a cow-boy in reality, but it is there you make a mistake. One of the best hands I ever knew had but one arm; he could catch a cow or horse as well as any of the boys, and on a round-up he got there in fine shape.

CHAPTER XVII.

LECTURE TO CATTLEMEN.

Founded on Matt. 24–31: "And He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Boys, I come to you with an announcement of the round-up which takes place in the springtime of eternity. There is not, perhaps, a single cow-man who has not experienced the glad emotions caused by the announcement of the date and locality of the opening of the spring round-ups.

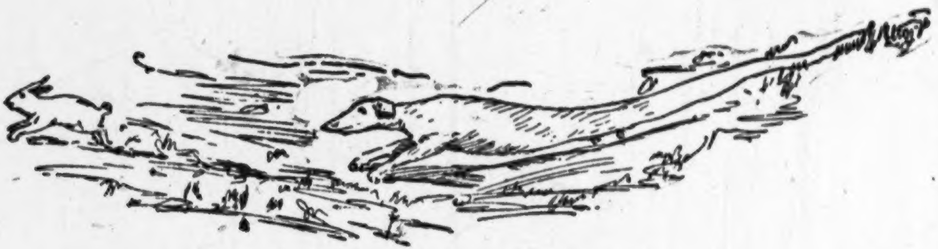
After a long dreary winter of inactivity there is nothing so enervating, no news so welcome as the announcement of the first round-up. When a fellow has blown in all his cash, borrowed all the boys could spare and run his cheek to its last cent's worth, when his old boots are beginning to run in at the heels and his hat, too, looks seedy, he longs for the free, wild life of the range, where no wash-bills trouble his slumbers and where he is monarch of all he surveys. Yet, when the time comes for the round-up there is plenty to do before one is ready, everything must be in good trim about his saddle, hopples, blanket, quirt, spurs and leggins. It is not a simple loll 'round until ready to mount and hie away, but there is preparation to make. Just so it is to be in the round-up of the universe, which takes place on the eve of time in the early dawn of eternity. He who, we are told, owns the cattle on a thousand hills, unlike the great herd-owners of this, our lovely Lone Star, who indiscriminately lay the little tug on everything that has not the ear-mark or the brand of a neighbor—this great King of cattlemen never brands a mavrick unless the mavrick is His own. He never clips the ears of a stray until that stray is "bought with a price;" or, in other words, there must "first be a preparation before becoming one of the great round-up." "Therefore, be ye also ready, for in such hour as you think not the Son of Man cometh." When we have each been assigned our lay, we round to one common center, where, as you know, the herd is cut, separating to each his own. Just so it will be in that last great round-up, the difference being that you and I will take the place of the range herd and there we are to be rounded up and the herd cut. Hear what the great herd book says. I refer you to Matt., 25th chapter and 31 and 32 verses, which reads like this: "When the Son of Man (or the great herdsman of life) shall come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him, He shall sit upon the throne of His glory and before Him shall be gathered all nations, and He shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." Now, when the herd is cut and those whose owners are present have taken their own, the tailings are allowed to drift at will and to be the prey of the cattle thief, or, in other words, they are allowed to drift out into the great range of uncertain protection, because as strays. But the cattle which have an owner will be cared for, taken into green pastures and fed through the cold, stormy weather. The good cattleman prepares a place for his cattle and they are not left to take chances with the common herd. Hear the great stock owner, this Cattle King: "Then shall the King say to them on His right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father (or ye of my Father's brand), inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." But hear what is to become of the tailings of that great round-up: "Then shall He say unto them on his left hand, depart from Me ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (or the great thief of the human soul). God has made the necessary preparation for this great round-up, and we are now to choose the pastures in which we are to graze. The Lord's pasture is a very promising one. Hear the testimony of one of the Lord's flock or herd who has been feeding there: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters."—Psalm 23, 1-2. "For the Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knoweth them that trust in Him." This precious promise may be fulfilled in your life, you need not wait until the great herd is cut before coming under the supervision and ownership of the great and good Master. Many who have accepted him have found what I have said to be true. You say that many who claim His brand are strays; true, I grant it, but unlike you or me, when some animal passes as ours, the great herdsman claims nothing that is not in His own legitimate ear-mark, and when the great separation comes they will be turned out through the left hand gate with the tailings. Yes, there are some of those who are now running on his range that have not passed under the great Inspector's eye, have never been recorded in the great tally book of life, they have by some carelessness of the herders slipped in and are trying to appropriate the sweets of the Master's pastures, but the eye of the great Night Watchman is upon them and He is crying in tones of compassion and love "Come unto Me and be ye saved" (receive My brand), and the terrible proclamation has gone forth, "Be not deceived, God is not mocked," and again "Woe unto you, hypocrites, like whited sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful, but are within full of uncleanness, ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." So you see, boys, no stray will ever be tolerated in the great classification or final round-up.

There are those of you, boys, who remind me of an old steer we once had in our range, which we called old Twist-horn, because his horns twisted right out nearly straight from his head and they were measured after he was killed and found to be six feet from tip to tip; you ask how I can find any resemblance between you and this old steer; it is not, I assure you, that you are as some people in the East would make believe, a horned set. No, it is in this, that old steer was raised a gentle calf, his mother was one of the best and gentlest milk cows on the ranch, but after he got up to be a steer of his own out from under the influence of old mother he went "hog wild." It is true when one found him he would pretend to be the gentlest steer in the range; but by and by he gathered a bunch of young cattle 'round him and made them very unruly; still, you could ride all 'round him, and even after his class of youngsters had taken to their heels he would stand or lie and chew his cud as good as to say, "You needn't bother about me, don't you see I am the best old steer in the range?" but just start him to the pen and then he taught you what his horns were made for. Sometimes he would move along at the head of the herd until he got nearly to the pen and all of a sudden make a break, and half the young cattle would go with him.

He was so much concerned for fear he would be corraled he never ventured into good range very far and he took up so much time educating his followers in cow devilment that he was never fat, he never enjoyed the fullness of good grazing and when he was killed he made the very poorest of dog meat, even his hide was full of grubs and was no good, his beautiful horns were too snarly to make good combs or knife handles.

Now comes the comparison. You, like the old steer, was reared in a Christian home by a kind, and maybe an indulgent, gentle and loving mother, who taught you to bow at her knee and say, "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take; this I ask for Jesus sake," and then you would kiss that precious mother good night, and after she had tucked you snugly in your little bed, that mother would kneel by your bedside and ask God to bless her precious child. After a time you grew to manhood, you began to roam out into the range for yourself and like old Twist, became a man of our own; then you became wild and though you are not outbreaking when approached, you refuse to be corraled in the great pen of God's loving invitation. Besides, you have gathered 'round you a following of young people, who are more skittish than you, in that they will scamper away on first approach, and you, feeling secure in your own heft, will stop and argue the case, and one who had nothing but your word for it would think you were certainly very good indeed. You will sit back and chew the cud of self-satisfaction and importance, and when approached by a Christian will begin at once to expatiate on your excellent qualities. One would have decided, if not acquainted with old Twisty, that he was one of the most pious steers on earth. You, like him, begin to tell how you pay your honest debts. That is right. How you never lie and steal. That is good. You do unto others, as you would have others do unto you. Now you may think you do, but to a close observer of your life you are not doing that; besides, you are refusing God's overtures of mercy and by your ungrateful example, you are leading others astray.

There is no sin that I can conceive to be greater than the sin of ingratitude. Suppose some man had taken you in, given you shelter and made it



Half a mile a streak of dog. (See page 184.)

possible for you to open a ranch in this range, by and by he asked you to give him dinner; to allow him to come in and eat with you, you know you would do it; you would consider it the grossest ingratitude to refuse him. Now, the great proprietor of this range of the universe sustained you all these years, has made it possible for you to open up and operate a ranch here, he has surrounded you with all that is pleasant, a wife and children, some of you, gives you sunshine and rain, all this beautiful earth to enjoy, has endowed you with reason that you can know your own from another man's (although you make some fearful mistakes) and all he asks in return is that you open the door of your heart and allow Him to come and eat with you and you with Him; in other words, to divide your blanket and grub. Hear Him, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man will hear my voice and open the door I will come in and eat with him and he with me."

Old Twist-horn was never worth a cent and was a drawback. You have never added one iota to the moral sentiment of the community where you live. Some of you never enjoy the good green valleys of spiritual life and keep many others off them and when you die, ..., what can be pointed to as the moral fruits of your godless life? The great Herdsman comes to you and is not unreasonable in his demands in asking you to let Him change your mark and brand. Hear Him, "Come now," not to-morrow, next day or a year hence, but "come now and let us reason together." God is reasonable. "Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool." By this means you may quit bushwhacking and leading so many of the young ones astray.

Many of you have taken or claim to have taken this Great Shepherd of the sheep as your protector and master. Some of you have been breaking into the Devil's pasture. Now that is too bad; you all know the character of an old fence breaker. If you have one in your herd you try to sell her to some one for beef, as she is a nuisance and always giving trouble. Did you ever notice the terrible consequences to the fence breaker? You will see them going 'round with a board flopping over their eyes. That must be very mortifying even to a cow. They are thus blinded to a certain extent, can see a little, but it is only side ways. Now suppose they wish to move along toward good water and grass with this obstruction to their sight, you can readily see the consequences. They stumble over this stump, that log, step in a ditch and all such difficulties are theirs. But it is no worse than the fence-breaking professor to that extent that he is infringing on the rights of the Devil. He is a trespasser and the old pasture man is too clever to allow that to be done without remuneration, so he just puts a board over your eyes, the board of self-condemnation. If you try to go to green pastures and still waters as long as you are in the devil's grounds you run up against the stumps of contempt, the bushes of sarcasm and criticism and so you go stumbling along. The old fence-breaker cow is no good for beef or milk and never raises good calves. Why? Because she receives such severe treatment she never gets fat, never enjoys good grazing. Neither the old break of a professor; they never enjoy a good solid feast with the Lord They are always poor spiritually, never rear their children as they should in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

The Devil's pasture is very easy to get into anyhow. It is smooth on the outside, but as certain as you get in and attempt to get out you get your beautiful white garments spoiled. The Devil, like the cow thief, is not very particular about the older cattle. The cow thief allows other people's old cattle to run in his pastures and drives them in sometimes and he may not try to steal the old cow, but works after the increase. You may be a real Christian and be so weak as to creep into the Devil's pasture through a saloon door, a gambling den, a race-course, through the gate of avarice, tattling, back-biting and many others. The wily old stock thief keeps them open. He don't care just so he can keep you in, he is satisfied with your increase. You can go on to glory with nothing but pin-feathers in your wings, just so he can secure your children. His fence has very severe barbs on the inside and the only way you can get out is to shut your eyes and tear through. It will leave scars they may heal up after awhile, but the marks of a fence breaker will go with you through life, will impair your usefulness and stand out as a continual menace to your own moral worth, for God has said, "What ye sow that also shall ye reap." But you had better get out now and save your children.

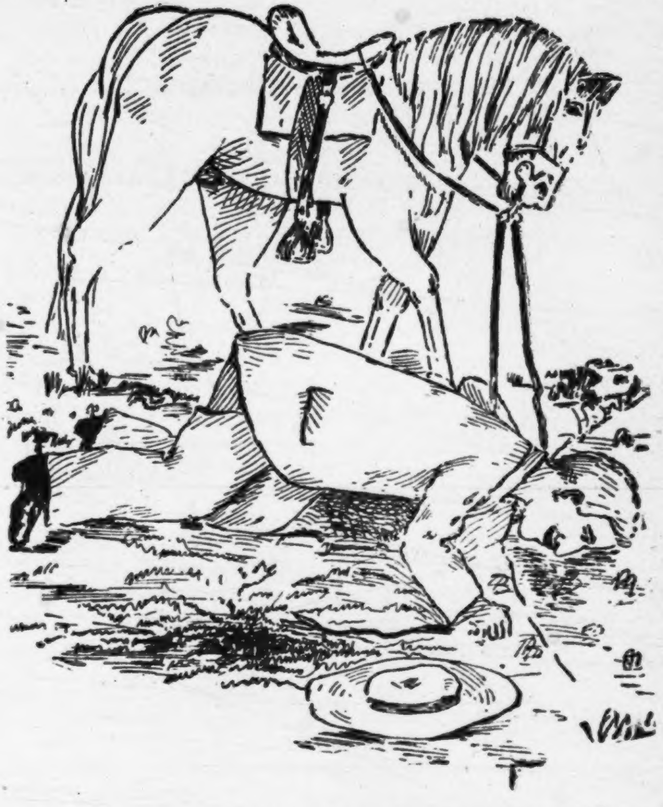
Boys, if you are in the old thief's pasture just take a run, and jump right through, out into the sunlight of God's own pastures green, for He invites you now. Hear Him, "Only acknowledge thine iniquity that thou has transgressed against the Lord, thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree and ye have not obeyed My voice, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you."—Jer. 3, 13–14. "I will heal their backslidings. I will love them freely, for mine anger is turned away from him."—Hos. 14, 4. And again the Lord says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."—1st John 1, 9.

You know there is quite a difference in the disposition of horses. Some horses you never can tame. They have to be broken every spring. When you first pen him he is wild as a buck. You lay your tug on him and he chokes down, but, by and by, he becomes bridlewise and makes an excellent cow-pony as long as you keep him at work, but just let him out of hand ten days and he will snort and rant 'round like a real broncho. There are some old Spanish professors that are all right, just as religious as can be through the rounding up and herding season, the summer camp meeting months, but they need only two or three months to go wild, and after they have two or three months on the Devil's range you just try to round them up and they prance round equal to any old white-eyed Spanish pony on the range. If any old broncho reads this let me beg you to put on the whole outfit of the Lord's harness and knowing your weakness for growing restless and unmanageable simply keep in harness all the time and don't go out among the mustangs without your harness on. Hear the instructions of the Headquarters Boss: "Come out from among them and be ye separate," saith the Lord, "and touch not the unclean (join not in a mustang stampede) and I will receive you."—2nd Cor., 6,17. And He gives us a complete inventory of what to put on. "Put on the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand against the evils of the Devil." Put on the sinch of truth, martingale of righteousness, shoes of peace, saddle and blanket of faith, bridle of salvation, sinch for the loins, martingales for the breast, saddle and blanket for the back and bridle for the head. You know a good, strong, broad girth is better than any other, martingale keeps the head and neck in proper relation to the breast, blanket serves to keep the back from hurting, the bridle for the rider or guide to turn the horse and keep him from running into wire fences or brush thickets, in fact it is protection, for if the head is kept right the body will not go far wrong. Now take this outfit and don every article and then take the weapon, this grand old herd book, as your lariet, go out and try your hand on mavrick sinners, keep the iron hot and the old sword sharp, and if you will do something every day to try to catch some of the Devil's strays and put them into the green pastures of communion with the Master of Calvary, then you will not have to be so closely hoppled when the revival season comes again.

The Mexican broncho has the hardest time of any other horse in the outfit and the Spanish or bucking Christian has the hardest time of any other, for "The way of the transgressor is hard." The Devil's claim on some of you boys is very nearly established by the statute of limitation. He has had you so long that nothing but a lawsuit can reclaim you. You may jump out of his pasture and go into the hospital to have your wounds treated, but just as soon as the great Physician pronounces you convalescent the Devil will have an outfit round you up and it will take all the force of your nature to slip away, in fact you can't do it if you are alone. They would heel you, throw you, tie you down and if you did not resist with all your might they would drag you back bodily.

I never will forget how hard and how often the Devil's outfit has rounded me up since I was marked and branded. He always tries to cripple you first. He will shoot you and sometimes have half a dozen of his minions after you shooting at one time. The first volley that was ever fired at me was a set of small fire-arms. The Devil never wastes his ammunition, he is a most economical character. He never uses a cannon when a popgun will answer and, strange to say, ther are more people crippled with popguns than any other way. There were seven or eight hands in the outfit that rounded me up first and the first volley was from the little popgun of ridicule, the little shafts stung tremendously. You see I was young and tender, not long in the new pasture. I finally got so weak that I saw I would faint without help, so I began to call for help; by and by I heard a loving voice in the distance calling: "Fear thou not, for I am with thee." I felt better at once and again I heard the same loving voice closer, now crying out: "Resist the Devil and he will fly from thee." You ought to have seen me, boys. I began to kick and scratch and bite with all my strength. I just drew out my little sword and began to slash 'round with it. I didn't know very well how to use it, but I did the best I could, and though I got bruised up in the fray "I came out more than conqueror through Him that loved us." Yes, more than conqueror, because I captured one of the boys in the battle and changed his mark and brand. He is now on the list of those who will be ready at the great roll-call to answer "Here am I." Now, boys, some of you have in days gone by sat with me 'round the same camp-fire; we have laughed at the same stories, eat our beef and red pepper from the same pot, and to tell you that I love you is putting it tamely. I loved you then, I love you now. You and I know what it is to need a friend, one who will stand by you in time of trouble. I have found Him. I bring Him now and call on you to stand up and let me introduce you to Him. He has stood by me when it seemed the Devil and all his outfit had joined to catch me; but, bless the name of the Big Boss, at such times, many of which it seemed that I was hog-tied hand and foot, He always came to the rescue, for "He's a friend that sticketh closer than a brother;" for when we were all in the possession of the enemy of souls, He stepped right up and purchased us with his own dear life. When we stood, as it were, in the great slaughter-pen of death, the hand of execution raised above us, the packing-house doors open ready to receive us, the loving Christ stepped in and opened the door through which we might escape, and with blood-stained hands and bleeding side He stands holding it ajar calling to you, dear boys, calling to all who will hear to walk out of the shute of condemnation into the light and freedom of God's own pardoning love. Hear him calling to you. "Let the wicked forsake his ways and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "The spirit and the bride say come, and let him that heareth come, and let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Now, boys, you have His pleading. Will you not mount your steed of good resolutions, and with the quirt of determination and the spur of moral courage, strike right out for the great headquarters ranch of God's eternal salvation and reward. "It is only a step to Jesus. Why not take it now?" March out through the gates of his eternal grace, and with the blood-drops falling on your heart to-night, be made to rejoice in a new-born hope, take up your march to the shelter, "He has gone to prepare." He will guide you with his watchful eye, and when the last great round-up shall come, you will have his road brand as a seal of



Green-horn trying to be a cow-boy and drink from a cow track.

your right to enter into the eternal habitation, green fields, and living fountains of sweet deliverance.

Start to-day for a better life. It may be that temptations and privations may beset your pathway, but remember that "they that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." And when the last cow has been tied, when the last horse has been hoppled, when the last camp fire has been made, when the last watch has been called, and when the cold, icy fingers of the grim monster shall begin to encircle your shivering limbs, in that hour of sorest need you can trust our Leader to stand by you, and when you come to step down into the chilly waters of the river of death, He will be there to guide you safely over, for He has crossed it and knows every foot of the way; then, when the angel shall come "with a great sound of a trumpet" to round up the herds of the universe, the great Inspector will be there, and running his eye down the list of the great tally book of life, if you will, he may note that on the—day of——you took on you the ear-marks and the brand or seal of the blood washed of the lamb, for "he sealed our redemption with His own precious blood." Then, when the herd is trimmed, you will be one of the number to whom it is said: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, enter the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." So let my closing admonition be: "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found; call ye upon Him while He is near;" "For God so loved the world that

He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

"Now, the Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious unto you, may the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace."

When I think of the last great round-up
  On the eve of Eternity's dawn,
I think of the host of cow-boys
  Who have been with us here and have gone,
And I wonder if any will greet me
  On the sands of the evergreen shore;
With a hearty "God bless you, old fellow,"
  That I've met with so often before.

I think of the big-hearted fellows
  Who will divide with you blanket and bread,
With a piece of stray beef well roasted,
  And charge for it never a "red."
I often look upward and wonder,
  If the green fields will seem half so fair;
If any the wrong trail have taken
  And fail to "be in" over there.

For the trail that leads down to perdition
  Is paved all the way with good deeds;
But in the great round-up of ages,
  Dear boys, this won't answer your needs.
But the way to green pastures, though narrow,
  Leads straight to the home in the sky;

And Jesus will give you the passports
To the land of the sweet by-and-bye.

For the Savior has taken the contract
To deliver all those who believe,
At the headquarters ranch of His Father,
In the great range where none can deceive.
The Inspector will stand at the gate-way,
And the herd, one and all must go by;
The round-up by the angels in judgment
Must pass 'neath His all-searching eye.

No mavrick or slick will be tallied
In the great Book of Life in His home,
For He knows all the brands and the ear-marks
That down through the ages have come.
But along with the strays and the sleepers
The tailings must turn from the gate;
No road brand to gain them admission,
But the awful sad cry "Too late!"

Yet, I trust in the last great round-up
When the rider shall cut the big herd;
That the cow-boys will be represented
In the ear-mark and brand of the Lord;
To be shipped to the bright, mystic regions
Over there in green pastures to lie
And led by the crystal, still waters,
In that home in the sweet by-and-bye.